Like Real People Do

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Like Real People Do

by lamb_gutz

Summary

“For your next work, you will be put in pairs and given different topics to research. The deadline is until next Friday."

Will paid her no mind as he was busy hearing Zeller already complaining about his new partner, although soon he hoped that he had continued ignoring her.

"... And Lecter will be paired with Graham." Will's attention snapped back to Bedelia once he heard Hannibal's surname, and his mind went blank. No, no way in hell he would stay in the same room as the other man if he wasn’t extremely necessary.

"Excuse me teacher, can I please change partner?” he looked back at Hannibal, who was slightly grinning at him. “I don't think I'm suitable for him."

Bedelia furrowed her brows, looking between the two of them. "Why not? You're the most excellent students in my class, I believe that it's appropriate to work with someone at your same level. I’m counting on you two to do a great job."

"Yes, but-"

"Goodbye, Mr. Graham."

The two smartest students of the class get paired together for a philosophy project. The only problem is: they are exact opposites.

Notes

Hello hello! This was a fic that I started in 2016 but never finished; the style of writing is very different from my current one (for example I used a lot of different points of view here), so I tried to do my best to rewrite some parts, and now here we are!
This is just a silly fanfic where they all go to uni together (let's pretend that they are all almost the same age, except Bedelia and Jack who are teachers for some reason dudhdh)
Hope the dynamics made sense, I exaggerated the characters' personalities juust a bit to make them more 'comical'-
(PS. Sorry for eventual grammatical errors, I tried my best!!)

The Project

Hannibal's pov

Hannibal woke up at 5 a.m. as every other day. He claimed that his body didn't need that many hours of sleep, so he was used to getting up early. He made his bed impeccably as always and headed to the bathroom to have a quick shower before getting dressed. He decided to wear a pair of dark brown pants, a beige vest and a black turtleneck shirt; he waited to put on his shoes because the classes wouldn't have started for one hour at least.

He was sitting near the window, enjoying the view of the college's huge garden that was starting to turn white as the colder seasons approached.

Silence filled the room, and it was something that he was quite fond of. He didn't quite enjoy the company of others, that is why he chose not to share the room with any other student, also in order to not be disturbed in his studies.

It was almost 8 a.m. and classes were soon to start, he left the dormitory and headed to his first class. Even if he had excellent marks in all of the subjects, he much preferred the humanistic ones, especially Philosophy. He was always interested in getting to know people's way of thinking, their values, their minds.

As he was walking down the hallways, he came across Abigail, a smart and bright girl from the first year that was known on campus for keeping up with her older colleagues. Hannibal had the opportunity to see her up close in one of his classes, and was surprised at how pleasant it was talking to her.

The girl waved at him and then approached him with a shy smile.

"Good morning! Sorry to bother you, I know it's almost 8 a.m. and you're probably running late for your classes- but I promise it won't take long!" she began to say. "Yesterday I saw you in Biology class and since I'm no genius…well, I just wanted to ask you a few notes."

Hannibal looked at his watch and clicked his tongue, slightly bothered but trying not to make it noticeable. One thing that he absolutely despised was being late, specifically if it was his favourite lecture. "Good morning, Abigail. Don't worry about it, I still have plenty of time left, what's the problem?"

A big smile started forming on the girl's face. "Oh, thank you Hannibal! But now I'm running late as well, so if you have any free time this week maybe we can meet at the library?"

He was pleased that Abigail didn't insist any further and he returned the smile. "Alright then, we'll talk later so we can work out when to meet."

He dismissed her and started walking faster than usual to arrive at his class, but he soon noticed that he wasn't the first to get there.

A student was sitting in the second last row, scribbling something on his notebook, then glanced at Hannibal when the door swung open.

It was Will Graham, one of the quietest but (to his displeasure) most intelligent students that he shared classes with. The two of them had started an unofficial rivalry at the beginning of the semester, when they had been the only ones to get the highest score in a series of exams. From then on, they always tried to surpass the other, whether it came to the marks, or simply which one of them would arrive in class first. Sometimes they would both get to the door at the same time, and that would lead to an awkward conversation filled with a bunch of "Just so you know, I got here first".

So when Hannibal arrived at the classroom and saw bright green eyes staring at him (and he could have sworn he'd seen the other guy smirking at him), Hannibal could feel a sense of shame running through his body.

However, that was only the beginning to get him back.

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Will's pov

It was time for the weekly philosophy class; groups of students had already started walking into the room so as not to lose their seats and waited for the teacher to come. For once, Will arrived early and sat in the second last row at the last place, so that he was ready to leave once the bell rang.

He casually looked around the classroom, when he noticed that the usual seat of a certain student was empty: Hannibal Lecter, the teacher's pet, hadn't arrived yet. *Weird.*

Certainly he wouldn't miss a lesson, especially one where he could brag about his immense knowledge using refined quotes and way too many metaphors with Mrs. Du Maurier.

Usually, it was a race to get there before the other man was already sitting in the front seats. Will smiled to himself, proud that he had beaten Hannibal on time.

As soon as Will thought about it, there he was, the man in question walking through the door; he was wearing one of his typical vests with an intricate design and carrying books under his arm. Will wondered if the guy owned *any* type of casual shirts or if he just lived in fancy outfits. Maybe he slept in them too.

Soon, other students began to fill the class. Beverly was the first of his friends to arrive, so she sat next to him and they began to decide their plans for the evening. Zeller and Price, arriving some time later, decided to take the row before them, waving a little hello to them as they continued chatting between each other about an episode of their favourite crime podcast. Will hadn't seen Zeller all day, but he could easily presume where he had gone. Slowly, the class started filling up with other students, including Chilton (entering the room making snarky comments about other people) and Alana, seeming cheerful than usual.

After a couple of minutes spent chatting, the teacher finally arrived. The students greeted her and took out their notebooks, careful that they wouldn't miss a word. Her said. Philosophy was a complicated subject and Du Maurier's way of teaching could be difficult to follow at times, but Will couldn't help to find it fascinating. He couldn't deny that his good grades were also thanks to Bedelia's favoritisms; he didn't like to talk, mostly because he hated having all the attention on him, yet he was one of the few people that always responded to the teacher's question. He was one of the favourites, but not the only one.

The other person able to keep up with him was Lecter, who also had the highest grades in Philosophy. Will couldn't stand his good fake manners, and it was sure that it was all a composed act to get what he wanted. Will was *certain* that he was hiding his true personality, and he sometimes wished that the other student would lose his composure at least once.

"Man, he's giving you a hard time today. When will you two stop this nonexistent rivalry?" Beverly chuckled, trying to get a reaction out of Will. She knew that he was a competitive person, and would always provoke him whenever it came to Hannibal-

"He's just a show off," he declared "he's using all those fancy words just to look sophisticated." He was getting frustrated as he heard Hannibal talking to Bedelia, but tried not to show it to Beverly.

His face, though, probably betrayed him, as his jaw unconsciously clenched. At his side, Beverly sighed, and whispered a soft "Whatever you say, I guess."

The hour passed quickly and everyone was getting ready to move to the next classroom, but Bedelia stopped collecting her books and cleared her throat, in an attempt to bring back the students' attention to her.

"Before you all leave, I have to give you an assignment for next week. Soon it will be winter break and you still need to have a final vote." She took out a pen and a sheet of paper, starting to write something on it. "For your next work, you will be put in pairs and given different topics to research. The deadline is until next Friday for the first group."

After this announcement, the class started filling with whispers (also some praying that each of them wouldn't end up with someone lazy), but Bedelia continued without interrupting herself. "I already picked the pairs myself, so you don't have to. Chilton, you will be with Zeller. Bloom will be with Katz, Price with Lounds..." Signs and more chattering could be heard while the teacher listed the pairs.

Will paid her no mind as he was busy hearing Zeller already complaining about his new partner, although soon he hoped that he had continued ignoring her.

"... And Lecter will be paired with Graham." Will's attention snapped back to Bedelia once he heard Hannibal's surname, and his mind went blank. No, no way in hell he would stay in the same room as the other man if he wasn't extremely necessary. He would have even preferred telling all of his deepest secrets to Freddie than talking to that guy.

"I expect much from you two. See you next week." she added, before folding the paper and putting it in her case.

In the meantime, Hannibal just nodded and gave his thanks to her, not bothering to look back at the other man. Will regained his thoughts and quickly went down the stairs to stop the woman before she left the room. "Excuse me teacher, can I please change partner?" he looked back at Hannibal, who was slightly grinning at him. *Ugh, don't try to be nice to me now.* "I don't think I'm suitable for him."

Bedelia furrowed her brows, looking between the two of them. "Why not? You're the most excellent students in my class, I believe that it's appropriate to work with someone at your same level. I'm counting on you two to do a great job."

"Yes, but-"

"Goodbye, Mr. Graham." Bedelia stopped him before he could finish, giving him one last glare before she exited the door and leaving Will clueless on what to do.

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The next lessons passed in a flash as Will was busy thinking about the problem with the new assignment.

How was he supposed to work with someone like Hannibal? They had *nothing* in common, the only possible topic of conversation being Philosophy, and even then he didn't think they could ever get along. Hannibal was probably one of those people that always had everything organized, not letting anyone even near his stuff so as not to be contaminated with such peasants like him and the others. Or at least, that was what Will presumed the other man was like.

He also realized that he kept staring at Hannibal way more than he should have during class; in fact, he was supposed to do the exact opposite, meaning ignoring him as much as possible until he was obligated to acknowledge his presence. However, that wasn't supposed to be today.

Once the last class ended, he tried to rush back to his room to shut himself in for the time being, but while on his way to the dormitories, he met the only person he was trying to avoid.

While rushing through the hallway, Will almost clashed with his diligent classmate. Will cursed himself, as well as every possible deity that was playing tricks on him

"Ah, hello Will, what a coincidence. I wanted to talk to you about the project." Great, *exactly* what Will didn't want to do.

"The teacher has given us a difficult topic, so I would like to begin our research this week so that we don't have to stress too much about the deadline." Hannibal kept talking, although Will didn't meet his eyes, and instead focused on Hannibal's wrist, which was adorned with a gold and expensive-looking watch.

Every time he saw him, he was always dressed impeccably, not a single hair out of place. He then realized that appearance was another noticeable difference between them. His classmate,

all dressed up with a collected demeanor, and himself, his hair a constant mess of brown curls, baggy clothes picked up in a rush, and an aggressive temperament. They couldn't be more opposites.

"...and I think it's best if we start working tomorrow." Will finally looked up as Hannibal finished his discourse, and realized that he had missed half of the conversation.

"Wait, tomorrow? Already?" A small smirk formed on Hannibal's lips, probably at the realization that the other man wasn't following his speech.

"Yes. We don't know each other's study method,so I suggest that we get to know that first. Is that okay with you?" Hannibal stared at him, waiting for a response, and Will looked away once again. Keeping eye contact was difficult, especially when it came to his classmate.

"Yeah, I guess so. We can't use my place though, my roommate will probably be there. The library isn't good either 'cause other people will make noise…" Will said, trying to flee this potential meeting by finding any possible excuse he could think of.

"We can use my room since I don't share it with anyone. We certainly wouldn't be disturbed." Will realized his plan to dismiss Hannibal had already failed and he began to feel frustrated.

He clenched his jaw again and responded with a simple and forced "That's great." It wasn't great, of course, but he knew that he couldn't do anything about this situation. All he wanted was to return to his room and forget all about this.

After this awkward interaction, Will finally went back to his bedroom and got himself ready, as he was supposed to meet Beverly, Zeller and Price in an hour.

His roommate was nowhere to be found,so he took the opportunity to change outfits (and borrow one of Zeller's shirts since his good ones were nowhere to be seen) and have some peace for himself.

Opposite Partners

Chapter Notes

Whoops I managed to finish this in the same day so I might as well post it
This chapter is a little bit shorter, just a filler to know more about the characters' relationships :)
(Also Will has a short temper can you tell)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's pov

Will arrived at the schoolyard where his friends were waiting for him. The subject of conversation soon became the philosophy project, and Will was already regretting joining in the group outing. Couldn't they have talked about something else? Even the weather was more interesting than this. Zeller was complaining about being paired with Chilton, and Beverly laughed.

"At least you got to work with Alana, who is like, an actual decent person?" Zeller complained, gesturing towards his friends. "Chilton is just going to disagree with anything I say no matter what, because he's the expert in every single thing in the universe."

Beverly simply shook her head and said "I mean, she's quite intelligent, but she seems like a "*live,laugh,love*" type of girl. I can't say we're really similar."

"Well, it's not like me and Freddie Lounds have that much in common." Price added to the conversation. "One word too many and I might end up in the university's daily newspaper."

"Speaking of partners…" Beverly shifted closer to Will. "What do you think of yours?" The trio looked at him, all grinning and waiting for an answer. Will felt almost offended at the question.

"What? I'm not ecstatic at the idea of working with someone like Lecter. We have nothing in common." Zeller and Price looked at each other, still smirking. Beverly raised an eyebrow. They were *certainly* hiding something.

"Okay,it's true that you're different in a bunch of things, like how he's always dressed like he's going to the gala and you dress like a… middle aged dad." Will opened his mouth in protest, but Beverly went on with her speech.

"*However*, you're both very smart and at the top of our class. I bet you would have a lot to talk about if you just..tried to get along. Plus, he's really handsome if you think about it." The other two men nodded to the last sentence, but Will was just getting even more nervous. He

wanted to sink into the ground and never come back. Didn't he get humiliated enough already?

"You're not really helping here guys. I already agreed to the meeting, so I really can't back down right now." Will said, defeated ".I might just think of a possible solution tomorrow, once I actually meet the guy."

"At least try not to kill him." Zeller added. "He always answers Bedelia's questions when no one else wants to, so at least he's useful."

"I'll try, but I'm not promising anything."

And with that, he got up from the field and left the others earlier, reasoning on how he was gonna solve this problem (without killing his classmate, of course.)

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Hannibal's pov

After the end of the lessons Hannibal was going back to his room when he met Will; the man didn't seem happy to see him, although it was rare to find his classmate in a good mood.

He took the opportunity to talk to him about the project, otherwise god knows when he will see him again. He presumed that Will would start to avoid him all week.

Of course he wasn't pleased to work with Will either due to the obvious differences in their ethics, but at this point he didn't question the situation and assumed that Bedelia had paired them together on purpose.

Hannibal noticed how Will was trying to dismiss him just by his face alone, so he didn't push their conversation any further and rather left after arranging their first meeting.

He must admit that he found Will's behavior quite interesting. The man didn't look at him once when he was talking, rather focusing his gaze elsewhere, and when caught the man resembled a startled deer, a confused and troubled expression across his face. At that moment Hannibal thought that, eventually, he would have actually liked working with him. Or at least, get to know how his mind worked.

He was walking down the hallways a bit lost in his thoughts when he bumped into someone. Without even looking at them he immediately started apologizing, only to be met with a recognizable face.

"Oh, sorry Hannibal! I wasn't looking where I was going." Abigail said with an awkward laugh, and the man heaved a sigh of relief.

"I'm sorry too Abigail, my mind was somewhere else, are you okay?" Usually, he found it extremely rude when people didn't pay attention where they were walking, and he couldn't bear that for once it was him who did that.

"It’s fine, really! I've never seen you so distracted though, has anything happened?" Abigail asked genuinely.

Hannibal couldn't find an answer on why he had been so careless, as the only possible explanation could be his thoughts about his classmate. However, that couldn’t be it, he wouldn’t (and mustn’t) be so affected by him. He didn't want to lie to her either, trying to come up with an excuse.

"Nothing in particular, just a…situation that seems to be more complicated than expected.” Hannibal simply said. He didn’t want to press the matter any further, so he tried to change the subject. "You said last time that you had some issues with Biology, correct?”

“Yeah, I tried taking a more advanced class, but I don’t think I’m really suitable for it.” She glanced to the side, almost with an air of defeat.

“Nonsense, you just need a little bit of a further explanation. How about we meet at the library in about…two hours?” Hannibal said in an attempt to console her. Passing the afternoon with Abigail would also be beneficial to him, as it would keep his mind occupied from the assignment.

Her eyes lit up at the suggestion and she nodded. "Oh sure! That's a great idea, thanks again for your time. I'll see you later then!" She smiled again, waved goodbye and left the hallway.

Hannibal hadn't helped anyone at school before; even though he had the highest marks in basically every subject, no one has actually ever asked him to help. Maybe it was that they were too intimidated to approach him, due to his weird demeanor or his appearance. He didn’t mind his solitude.

As per usual, Hannibal was the first to arrive at the appointment, even a little bit earlier than they had planned. He started wandering through the bookshelves in search of something that could catch his attention, although his mind had already started drifting towards the project. Nonsense, he shouldn’t be worried about such trivial things. Who he was partnered with wouldn’t have affected his work that much.

Fortunately, Abigail arrived not much later and greeted him with a smile. “Hi Hannibal, sorry to keep you waiting, but I couldn’t find my notebook!”

“Don’t worry Abigail, I have nowhere to go after all.” Hannibal claimed, even though he despised having his plans totally altered. As long as their meeting wouldn’t affect his daily routine, it would be all fine.

In the end, the issue was easily fixable, a simple mistake that was hard to notice at first. There was still some time left to how long the appointment was supposed to last, so Hannibal tried to learn more about the girl sitting besides him.

They started talking about their hobbies, and Abigail seemed particularly interested in Hannibal’s cooking.

“I’m terrible at cooking for myself, I usually eat canned food or whatever is the fastest option.” Abigail said, and Hannibal squinted his eyes at her. “...don’t be mad at me, please?”

“I will prepare you a meal someday, or else I’m afraid you will starve to death, or get food poisoning.” Hannibal joked, gaining a chuckle from the girl.

“By the way, this morning you talked about struggling with something too, what is it?” Abigail asked, the topic of conversation always returning back to this. it seemed that she was curious to know the answer. In fact, even Hannibal was curious as well.

At first, the man was hesitant to tell her about his current situation; he didn’t like talking about what was bothering him with someone else, especially since it really wasn't anyone’s business, but she didn’t seem judgemental, rather looked like she wanted to offer advice. Hannibal sighed, thinking of a possible way to explain his issue.

“You see, we were put in pairs of two for a project and I ended up with someone who is pretty much my opposite.” he started to say. “They're harsh, competitive, and possibly lazy. I have no clue how we will be able to work together and how I should approach them.”

Abigail furrowed her brows, trying to think of a response. “Well, maybe you should try to get to know them better before even starting your assignment. Since you know how to cook, you could invite him to lunch! That’s a pretty good excuse to learn more about a person.”

Hannibal must admit that he really didn’t think about this option. It was true that a well prepared meal could possibly soften the other man, and maybe make him more pliant to listening to him.

Hannibal nodded and made a mental note about this. “Yes, I think it’s a good idea. Thank you for the suggestion.”

He looked at his watch; their meetings should end in a couple of minutes, just as planned. “Now, I think it’s getting late, so if you don't mind I need to get back to my room.”

“Oh sure, thanks again for helping me with Biology, and I hope your appointment goes well! See you around!”

The girl left the library immediately after saying goodbye, while Hannibal got up from his chair and started walking through the aisle. He stopped at a particular section, where he picked up a book about various Italian recipes.

If he wanted to get something out of Will, he had to act careful and gentle, otherwise he would end up getting the opposite reaction.

Chapter End Notes

next chapter coming in the next days ;)

Nosebleed and Risotto

Chapter Notes

> Warning for a tiny bit of violence as Will gets into a little altercation with Chilton ;)
> (Ps. Please don't take this characterization too seriously, I love Chilton but I just wanted to make him more like a mean girl for the plot lmao)
> Also Hannibal is soo special that he managed to get a kitchen just for himself. He's just obviously that convincing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's Pov

Staying awake at night had become part of Will's routine for the past month. He would continue to roll around his bed in search of an ounce of sleep at a decent hour, but at the end he would always end up in a deep slumber only when the sun had already risen.

Despite that, he managed to always wake up in time for class. Or almost.

That day he woke up 10 minutes before the first lesson started and quickly got up from his bed, picking up the first clothes he found in the already messy drawer. After putting on a green graphic t-shirt, a flannel shirt and a pair of dark blue jeans, he hurried to the classroom and saw that nearly all students were already there, including his friends (along with Zeller who could have probably woken him up at some point).

He attempted to go to his seat unnoticed, but he stopped when he heard a familiar voice calling him.

"Good morning Will, you're later than usual." Hannibal, sitting in the first row, greeted him with a slight smile. Of course the bastard was looking proud of himself, as he had won their competition of who arrived first that day.

"Hello Lecter. I accidentally overslept today. Don't worry though, I'm not gonna be late to our appointment." He returned the smile, hoping the man would drop the conversation.

"Speaking of appointments, I thought I'd make lunch for both of us, so you can come to my room right after the end of lessons. Is that alright for you?"

Will raised his eyebrows at the unexpected offer. Hannibal offering to do something for *him* ? Was he trying to poison him?

"Uh, that's…fine I guess. See you later then." Will responded before going to his desk.

He sat just in time for the teacher to arrive, and for the rest of the lessons he mentally prepared himself for the afternoon; his sociability was already very limited, plus he couldn't see through Hannibal like he usually did with other people, and that annoyed him.

His behaviour was strange, very strange considering that the other man didn't even want to share his notes with the rest of the class, let alone share some of his precious time with someone else. Maybe Hannibal had bumped his head and had suddenly become very caring towards him. Or maybe (this being the most plausible option) he just wanted to gain something out of Will.

He couldn't decide whether he wanted to stay away from him or wanted to get closer. Hannibal was intriguing, at least Will could give him credit for that; a hardworking but mysterious student that was known generally by everyone for his efforts, while also not leaving a single hint about his real personality aside from that pupil figure.

Once the last class of the morning was over, he was supposed to have lunch with his new partner. He spent a few minutes with Beverly, who was reassuring him that an afternoon with Hannibal won't hurt him (Will, in contrary, disagreed).

"You'll get a free meal out of it! Doesn't that sound great?"

"What if he puts, I don't know, rat poison in it and I die." Will pointed out, and Beverly gave him a light smack in the head.

"He's not a serial killer, Will. He's just a little off putting, but that's it. Now go, before you change your mind again."

He nodded, then got up and started heading towards Hannibal's room. His was located almost at the end of a long corridor, where little to no sounds could be heard coming from the other dorms. Perhaps that was the reason that his classmate had chosen that place to begin with.

On his way to the meeting, Will passed in front of a room with the door open, where he saw and heard Chilton talking (or rather, badmouthing) with his friends; he initially paid him no mind, until he heard his name coming out of Frederick's mouth and stopped in his tracks.

"...Not only I'm stuck with Zeller, I'll probably have to run into his roomate, Graham." Chilton then clicked his tongue. "Have you seen that weirdo? Always trying to put on an act to impress the teacher like he's better than everyone else."

Will stopped on the doorway, waiting to be noticed by one of them. Chilton looked at him with the corner of his eye, and crossed his arms on his chest, pretending like he wasn't there.

"He does nothing all day, but somehow he's still one of the professors' favourites. Why is that?"

"Next time, say it directly to me." Will said coldly.

Chilton turned around and opened his mouth as if to say something, but closed it once Will stepped right in front of him.

"Come on, I'm listening."

Chilton didn’t back away, instead put on a wide smile, as if to make fun of him. "Nothing much, I was just curious if you had to beg on your knees like a dog to get Du Maurier's attention."

Will could feel his blood boil and clenched his fists. He was already too furious to find a good response.

"I bet you learned all your tricks from your friend Lecter, after all you both don’t see past yourselves." Chilton finished with a smirk, making direct eye contact with Will

At that point he couldn't take it anymore; his mind went blank and shoved Chilton against the wall. As a response, the guy closed his hand in a fist and punched Will directly in the face, making him forcefully back away. Will touched his nose, and his fingers were painted red.

Will wanted to strike back, but Chilton's friends stopped him before he could do it, so he just wiped off some of the blood he had on his face with his shirt's sleeve and stormed out of the room full of anger, going straight to Hannibal's room. He didn't have time to think. If his classmate complained about making a mess with the blood, Will would have a good enough excuse to punch him as well.

Hannibal's pov

That day Hannibal had managed to convince the cooks to let him use the kitchen to prepare his lunch. He was known around the campus for being particularly persuasive when he needed to obtain something. He only had to talk some time with the chief, impress him some more on his cuisine, and he had access to the lunchroom whenever he asked.

As expected, the fridge didn’t have many ingredients to work with, so Hannibal had brought some during breaks. He wanted to make something tasty and delicate, but also something that wouldn't take too much time, so he opted for a classic Italian recipe; the saffron risotto.

It didn’t take long before he was finished, just in time for the meeting with Will. Once he had cleaned the shove and made sure that he hadn’t left a single trace, he thanked the cooks before heading towards his room, two packed containers in his hand.

Suddenly, the plans suddenly changed. He heard some shouting from one of the bedrooms, only to see Will rushing out with his hand covering half of his face. The man stopped in his tracks, rubbing his shirt’s sleeve on his nose, and it was then that Hannibal noticed that there was some blood running down his face.

“Will,” Hannibal shouted, making his classmate turn around. "What happened to you?"

“I-uh, shit, I-” Will tried to explain, but couldn’t find the right words.

Hannibal then approached Will, reached to touch his face in order to take a closer look and wiped off some of the blood that had run to his lips with his thumb. The boy was clearly furious, eyebrows furrowed and darting eyes looking everywhere but him. His delicate

features were ruined by the signs of a fight; Hannibal found it a bit disappointing, but at the same time found the boy more…attractive, in this state. Like something that seemed so innocent had been unexpectedly messed up.

As if realizing what he just thought of, Hannibal yanked his hand away, and tried to push back that feeling as a mere consideration.

"Let's go to my room so we can take care of this."

Hannibal guided them to his place, with Will hesitantly following him.

"Sit down, please." Hannibal suggested, pointing at the chair with his head while he put down the table the still warm containers. He then took some towels, dragged the other chair so that he was facing Will's, and started cleaning up the dried blood from his face, gentle enough that he wouldn't touch the swollen part.

"Are you gonna tell me how you almost got your nose broken?" Hannibal asked, raising Will's head to take a better look at the injury.

Will was still avoiding making eye contact with him and just mumbled something quite incomprehensible.

Hannibal stopped to look at him, still waiting for a clear answer. "So?"

Will sighed, taking the towel from Hannibal's hand quite aggressively. "I may have gotten into a row with that fuckhead, Chilton."

The man tried touching his nose, but winced at the sensation. "He was talking shit about me and my friend, so I couldn't take it anymore." Will explained in a low voice.

"You seem to have a very short temper, Will." Hannibal said. His classmate glared at him, but he continued nonetheless. "Although, you had a good reason to get angry this time."

"Huh, weird that you're taking my side." Will pointed out, and Hannibal just responded with a smile.

"The flow has stopped, so that's a good sign. Better if we start eating then, or our lunch will get cold."

"What did you make?" Will asked curiously, looking at the two containers that Hannibal had opened.

"It's a saffron risotto, an Italian dish, I'm sure you'll like it."

Will took an hesitant bite out of the meal, and his eyes lit up.

"How is it?"

"It's fine, I guess." Will said, even though his expression betrayed him. He started eating with vigor, and Hannibal wanted to chuckle at the vision.

Once they finished eating, Will started wandering around, looking at the huge amount of books (most about art, history and classical music) Hannibal had in his room and gently running his fingers through them. Looking at his profile, Hannibal noticed that his nose had returned to his usual size. It would have been a pity if that punch had permanently ruined his soft face.

Hannibal then shook his head, trying to erase those thoughts from his mind again. He wasn't fond of people touching his belongings, but couldn't help observing his classmate while he had a look of curiosity on his face.

“Are you interested in art, Will? You seem to be pretty fond of those books.” Hannibal asked.

Will simply nodded, his eyes scanning the different titles.

“Even if it doesn’t seem so, I actually like it quite a lot.” Will said as he traced a book's cover. "I'm really into the Renaissance period."

"The time of rebirth. Such a delicate era." Hannibal commented. Will turned his head towards him and gave him a soft and awkward smile, then shook his head and dropped his gaze.

“Uh, I guess we should probably get started on the project.” Will pointed out, and Hannibal nodded.

“So you had some ideas in mind?"

"Well…not really, I haven't thought about that yet." Will admitted. “But I can find something quick, I promise.”

Hannibal didn't seem to be bothered by that, instead just smiled and took out one of the philosophy books, handing it to Will and telling him to look for something that could inspire him.

The rest of the afternoon went peacefully, as they started working on De Maurier's project while taking little breaks to discuss art, occasionally music. Hannibal realized that Will was almost as much of an art lover as he was, and that having a calm conversation with him could actually be possible.

Time passed quickly and without them noticing it was already evening. The essential parts for the work were already done; Will was pretty satisfied with the results, even though Hanibal thought they could always do better.

Will rubbed his eyes with his palms, sighing heavily. “Are we done for today? Because I think my brain is about to melt.”

“Yes, we managed to do a lot today.” Hannibal responded as Will got up from his chair.

“Great, so uh- see you in a few days?”

“Of course, and manage to get some rest.” He had noticed that Will’s face looked like someone who hadn't slept for at least two weeks, probably due to insomnia or something of the kind.

“Easier said than done.” Will said, leaving the room. He then turned around, waved at Hannibal and said “See you soon, Lecter.”

Chapter End Notes

Can this boy possibly get any rest? Probably not, but you'll find out soon!

Art Connoiseur

Chapter Notes

> This chapter is from Will's perspective only! The boy has a lot of things on his mind I guess-
> (Warning for Chilton again, he's my favourite mean girl <3)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's pov

After a long afternoon spent working on the project, Will finally came back to his room. He had discovered new things about his partner, as not only was he an excellent cook, but also an avid art enthusiast. He probably had to give credit to Beverly, because talking to Hannibal actually didn't kill him, rather made him curious about the man.

His classmate always looked somewhat unreachable, like someone so full of himself and too busy to enjoy the company of others, but now Will had been proven wrong.

While Will could confirm that Hannibal seemed to be perfect in everything, including his cooking and learning skills, he had managed to catch a glimpse of the man's personality.

Still, Will couldn't shake off the feeling that the man was wearing a mask when around other people. Perhaps Hannibal really would have wanted to make friends. Or maybe he just used them to his advantage. He couldn't understand Hannibal's real reasons yet, but he hoped that he could find out soon enough.

They hadn't arranged their next meeting, though that would be a problem for another day. Will was too tired to think about that.

While he rolled around the bed, Zeller had come back from his dinner with Price.

"So, how was the afternoon with Lecter? Did he bore you to death?" His roommate asked.

Will shrugged, and dismissed his roommate's question with a simple "It was okay". Zeller hummed, not seeming too convinced about the answer, but didn't question him further after that.

At some point, his lack of sleep was beginning to take its toll, so he changed into more comfortable clothes and laid back on his bed, trying to fall asleep.

This was always the most difficult part; he simply laid there and stared at the ceiling, another sleepless night passed by rolling on his bed.

His mind kept wandering around his meeting with Hannibal and how strange that guy was; he barely knew Will, but still decided to prepare him lunch and treat his bleeding nose after he just got punched. Overall, that should have already been a warning sign that Will wasn't the suited partner for Hannibal and they probably had to switch with someone else. Despite all that, Hannibal didn't even hesitate to help him.

Will brought a hand to his lips and felt it sting a little at the touch. He remembered the way Hannibal grabbed his face and wiped the blood from his mouth, a gesture that should have probably made him flinch and abruptly move Hannibal's hand away. Somehow, maybe in the shock of it all, he couldn't be bothered enough by the sudden touch.

In the end, he slowly started drifting into sleep and managed to get four hours of rest. However, he still felt exhausted nonetheless.

He dragged himself to class and just listened to his friends' conversations as he didn't have enough energy to join in. The first lesson passed quickly as he fought hard not to fall asleep during the explanation.

For the second lesson he had to switch classes, and found Hannibal already sitting at his desk in the second row, busy drawing something in his notebook. Will greeted him and sat on the desk in front of him, probably realizing that a small chat with his classmate wouldn't hurt.

Will glanced down and noticed the amount of different pencils lined up on the surface, all perfectly sharpened. Hannibal had placed a hand on the drawing, so Will could only see some parts of it, strokes of red peeking through, but it looked like a portrait of someone.

"Hello, Will. Did you have some rest after all?" Hannibal asked while focusing on his face. His eye bags must have been visible at this point.

Will rubbed a hand on his face and shook his head. "Well, yeah, but not enough I guess."

"I wanted to ask you if we could continue our project this afternoon, but I don't want to make you work while you're exhausted." Hannibal explained, putting away all his equipment. As he removed his hand from the sketch, Will could finally see what it was. What he saw, though, wasn't expected.

Because Hannibal had been busy drawing a portrait of him.

It was a black and white sketch of his face in meticulous details, even spots of red to pick up his bloody nose. It was a beautiful drawing, despite him being the subject. Looking at it some more, Hannibal had definitely made him look prettier than he was, or at least that was his impression. Once again, his classmate had proven to be skilled in everything, from knowing a lot of notions about art, to even the practical aspect.

"How about meeting for breakfast in my room tomorrow?"

Will snapped back from his thoughts and glanced back at his classmate. Hannibal gave him a small smile, and Will nodded.

“Yeah, it’s fine.”

“Perfect. We don’t have classes in the morning tomorrow, so we can meet at 10.” Hannibal closed his sketchbook and Will sighed; at least that distraction was over. “And make sure to sleep some more this time.”

Will’s brain was too tired and also too confused to continue the conversation, so with a few more nods of his head he finished the chat with his classmate and quickly went to his seat.

—-

Maybe Will should have paid more attention to the lecture, but his irregular sleeping schedule was now making it even more difficult to follow. Furthermore, he couldn’t shake off the image of the sketch from his mind. He had to admit that it was really strange to be the subject of a drawing, but even stranger coming from his classmate, who not longer than a week ago seemed like he would freak out at the mere thought of talking to Will. Was it something that the other man always did when he started getting closer to someone? Making them some kind of portrait to thank them for their time? It seemed a bit of an odd approach to someone.

At this moment however, Will didn’t have the right mind to think about all that question.

He considered skipping the appointment with the trio to recover some hours of sleep like Hannibal suggested; they would understand if he didn't show up since he would see them at dinner anyway.

When the last bell rang, he went to eat a quick meal at the lunchroom and take a moment alone to relax, but as he was sitting at one of the tables, his peace was quickly interrupted.

“You look like a beaten dog, Graham.”

Will looked up from his lunch to see Chilton, who’d just decided to sit next to him, and seeing his usual shit-eating grin reminded him of yesterday’s incident.

"Aren’t your little friends waiting for you like always?”

Even his tone made Will tense up, and he unconsciously gripped his drink tighter before taking a deep sip, trying to finish his food faster.

“Piss off, Frederick”.

Chilton clicked his tongue and bumped shoulders with Will, still trying to maintain this fake friendly act. “You're being a bit rude, I'm just trying to be nice to someone who looks so lonely.”

Will sighed, not understanding why this guy was acting this way all of the sudden; he didn’t want to make a scene and possibly end up like yesterday (or get in much more trouble), he already had a lot on his plate at the moment. Although there was absolute frustration boiling inside of him, he put on a small smile on his face and turned to look at Chilton.

“You know, it seems you’ve been talking about me for a while now, almost like you're kinda obsessed with me, don’t you think?” Will got closer to his face, and Chilton tried to gain some distance. He could see that his mean act was beginning to crack, so he continued pushing towards him. He whispered the next sentence right in his ear.

“Seems like you think about me all the time, do you like me or something?”.

Chilton widened his eyes, mouth open as if to say something, but Will got up before he could say anything and simply smiled. If he couldn’t get violent, at least he could join his little games.

“Have a good meal, Chilton.”

And with that, he exited the lunchroom, finally able to go to his room and relax.

Will closed the door to his room, finally having a moment to himself and rest for a while (or at least, try to). He may have been a little *too* dramatic in the lunchroom, but he blamed his irritability on stress and his recent lack of sleep.

He flopped onto the bed and sighed, recounting all the things that had happened in the last couple of days; the Philosophy project, learning more about Hannibal, fighting with Chilton on top of it all-

After all this mess, he should probably go on vacation. He deserved at least that. He closed his eyes for a second, and the image of the sketch popped up in his mind again.

What did it mean? It was impossible thinking that Hannibal could be so interested in his character.

He shook his head and discarded that thought- they were just partners for a project, Hannibal probably only put up with him because he had to.

With his mind a little bit clearer, he closed his eyes again and quickly fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Yes I know finishing the chapter with him going to sleep is really cliche, but I wrote this as a teen so please don't judge-
Next chapter is going to be a little more intense tho ;)

Rudeness

Chapter Notes

Another chapter only from Will's point of view! Someone looks angry this time...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's pov

Will was woken up by a loud noise. He blinked a few times before glancing around the room, and right at the end of his bed he saw Zeller looking through the drawer, pulling out random clothes that were already forming a pile on the floor. Maybe they should clean up sometimes.

Will, still half asleep, asked "What are you doing?"

Zeller sighed. "I'm looking for my gray flannel shirt. You know, the one I bought a week ago. I can't find it anywhere."

Will squinted his eyes, trying to focus more on his roommate. "Oh yeah, I think it's under one of the beds. I thought I saw something, but I don't know how it got there." Of course he knew where it was- he used it two days ago hoping that his roommate wouldn't notice it.

"Anyway, why are you up already?" Will asked, rubbing his eyes.

Zeller raised an eyebrow at him. "Well, you should be up too, since it's dinner time."

Oh. Great.

Will apparently had managed to sleep through the entire afternoon, and so he rapidly got dressed and the two of them went to the cafeteria where the others were waiting. He was relieved that the topic of the assignment didn't come up this time, instead they were too busy cracking jokes and speculating which new scandal would be reported in the university's newspaper.

"I think it's gonna be you, Will." Price speculated. "I mean, your nose is still visible from a mile away."

"You're sure that it's not broken or something? It's looking a little bit crooked." Beverly added.

"Crook- guys, come on, do you really think Freddie is going to write an article about me?"

The trio looked at each other. Their silence was telling enough.

“Okay *maybe,* but at least don’t give her new ideas. Instead, help me get some food out of here. We can eat it in our bedroom.”

And so they stayed for some time in Will and Zeller's room, eating snacks they snuck out from the kitchen. Only when it was getting a little too late to stay up, Will realized that his nap only made things worse, and he found himself staring at the ceiling all night. His brain simply didn’t want to shut down in these hours.

Soon there was light filtering through the window and hitting Will’s face; he fell asleep when the sun began to rise, so at least a couple of hours must have passed. He looked to his left at Zeller's bed, but he found it already empty. What was he doing up so early on a day off?

Sitting up, he stretched his arms and looked at the clock on the wall: eleven o’ clock. He passed a hand on his face, trying to wake himself up. He might as well wait until lunch to eat something-

Wait.

Will’s eyes went wide; he was supposed to go to Hannibal’s room for breakfast at 10.

“Fuck,fuck, *fuck*- ” He mumbled to himself as he put on random clothes that he found in the closet and ran out of his room, trying to come up with a believable excuse for being late.

But what could he have said?

My roommate kept talking and I couldn’t leave? No, Zeller’s not one to talk too much.

Chilton beat me up again and I was late? A bit more realistic, but strange that it happened so soon again.

Ms. Du Maurier asked for a private meeting? God no, that sounded so weird and gross.

Whatever the excuse was going to be, he better had to find one quick.

Will found the door half-open and took a peek inside; he saw Hannibal sitting at his desk at the end of the room, seat directed towards the window, and tapping rapidly on the wooden table.

He could see two plates on the bigger table in the left side of the room, perfectly facing each other, and he couldn't help but feel ashamed for being so late to the appointment.

He slowly opened the door, trying to make as little noise as possible.

“Hello,Will.” Hannibal said, and Will froze in his steps.

Hannibal didn’t turn his head to look at him, and instead continued to tap his fingers on the writing desk. The tone of his voice wasn’t any different from usual, but Will could tell from his mannerisms only that he was furious, or at the very least disappointed. At this point, not even the best excuse he could say would better the situation, so in the end he settled on telling him the truth.

“Uh hey, sorry for being late, but I fell asleep really late yesterday and I’m all messed up so-”

“Why don’t we begin our research? We’re already one hour late to our schedule.” Hannibal got up from his chair, finally looking directly at Will. His expression didn’t convey a particular emotion, perhaps just a glimpse of disappointment. Even when he should have been mad, his classmate didn’t alter his facade, nor raise his voice.

Will looked away, glancing at his breakfast on the table, and felt guilty for making his classmate waste his time on him.

“Yeah,sure. I’m sorry that you had to go out of your way to make me breakfast.”

Hannibal didn’t respond immediately and just pulled a deep sigh, before picking up the two plates and putting the leftovers (or rather, the entire meal) in the trashcan nearby.

“Don’t worry, Will, let’s just focus on our assignment, shall we?” Hannibal responded, his tone flat.

Will simply nodded, not wanting to upset him more by talking.

They sat on the table facing each other, both of them working in silence and avoiding eye contact. He couldn’t concentrate at all due to the tension, so he ended up doing almost nothing before the clock struck noon. Hannibal looked at his watch and sighed, getting up from his seat.

“Alright, I think that’s enough for today, as I don’t want to take more of your time.” Hannibal clicked his tongue while picking up his books. "At this point, I should have prepared you lunch."

Will felt almost like he was being scolded. Why was Hannibal getting angry for something so trivial?

"Okay, I know I was *very* late, but why does it seem like you can't stand me today?” Will asked, not being able to stay silent anymore. If he wanted to get angry, at least he could do it properly.

Hannibal put away his books on the shelf and took a slight pause before answering. "There's a lot of things that I find rude, and one of them is tardiness. The second one is wasting food."

Will suppressed the urge to talk back at him and instead rubbed his face with his hands to calm himself. *Stay calm,Will.*

"Again, I'm sorry I made you make food for nothing, I swear it won't happen next time."

"Well, I learned that next time I'll wait before starting, so that nothing will go to waste." Hannibal retorted, turning his back to Will. “In case you decide to not show up at all at our next appointment.”

Will's temper reached his limit. He slammed his hands on the table and got up from his seat, walking towards Hannibal and looking him right in the eyes for the first time.

"I get it, it's better if I leave now. Sorry for being so *bothersome* , Lecter." With a sigh, he headed for the door and accidentally bumped into Hannibal's shoulder in the process, making the other guy flinch.

“Mr. Perfect can’t see past himself after all.” Will mumbled before reaching for the doorknob.

In a matter of seconds, Will felt hands grabbing him from his hoodie and found himself slammed against the wall near the door, face to face with Hannibal.

“Watch your mouth, Graham.” Hannibal firmly said, his voice trembling with anger.

Will was dumbfounded at his classmate’s sudden behavior, but at the same time, *intrigued* . Hannibal was keeping him still by the front of his shirt; it would have been difficult to get rid of him.

“What the fuck are you doing, Lecter?” he growled. What did he want to do? Was he going to beat him up? Minutes ago, he was almost perfectly sure that Hannibal wasn’t a violent person, although he couldn’t have possibly known how the other man was if someone pissed him off. Will tried to shake him off, but couldn’t lose his grip.

Unable to do anything, he thought of the only possible action he could do; talk. Or better, rile him up.

“Oh I’m sorry, did I offend his Majesty too much?” Will started saying, enjoying how Hannibal’s expression darkened. “I’m not perfect enough for you? Maybe I should follow your example and only talk to myself in front of a mirror-”

Suddenly, Will was snatched forward, right before being pushed with force against the wall again, causing him to hit his head.

“You’re rude, Graham. So, so fucking disrespectful.” Hannibal said through gritted teeth. “I’ve tried being nice to you, but you don’t ever listen.”

Finally , Will thought, *I’ve broken into him.* There it was, that real personality that he was trying so hard to hide.

Will couldn’t contain himself and huffed a laugh. He stopped struggling, and instead gazed at him. “I finally see the real you, huh?”

“You’re so frustrating, and you don’t even seem to realize it.”

Will stood perfectly still for a moment, looking at Hannibal while he continued rumbling on. The man was getting angrier and angrier, and Will enjoyed every minute of it, seeing this perfect person slowly losing his composure. All because of him.

Hannibal looked up and they locked eyes, both of them silent. There was still an arm holding Will firm and the grip on his shirt tightened.

The hit must have probably messed up Will at that moment. He should have probably smacked him back and run, but at that point he felt like the right thing to do was closing the distance between them, and so he kissed Hannibal.

It was clumsy and sudden, a hesitant hand on Hannibal's cheek, not knowing what to do. He didn't have a plan to begin with, so he simply pressed his lips against him. He didn't try to move, holding even his breath.

To his surprise, he then felt Hannibal melting into his touch and kissed him back. He cupped the back of his head, fingers in Will's curls, and the next press of lips was rougher,deeper. The hand on his shirt had loosened, now simply pressing against his chest.

The kiss wasn't something amazing; they were both inexperienced, their exchange becoming messy and sloppy with an occasional clash of teeth, but it just felt good, just right at that moment.

Will accidentally made a noise from the back of his throat, and that made him realize the situation he was in. He was finally the one to break away, pushing Hannibal at a minor distance and looking at him; his mouth was red, a little shiny with spit. To his realization, Hannibal looked *good* in that state-

God . *What was he doing?*

He abruptly pushed Hannibal further away, as if to realize what he just did. He was hit by a sudden sense of guilt and felt ashamed to make eye contact.

"I'm sorry." Is all that Will could bring himself to say.

He caught a glimpse of Hannibal's expression, who seemed confused as well. Both didn't say a word after that, as Will just left the door like nothing had happened.

Of course, he wouldn't forget about this instant so easily.

Chapter End Notes

We did it, first sign of contact for these two! Will there be the tiniest bit of angst? Probably yes. I'll update as soon as possible tho ;)

Doubts

Chapter Notes

I know this chapter is super long but! the boys need to talk about their feelings!! And they need advice from other people because they're dumb-
Anyways, enjoy this whole essay!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal's pov

It all happened so fast that there wasn't time to process all of that.

Hannibal was ready to just scold Will for not respecting their schedule, perhaps limiting the times that they had to work together, but he definitely didn't expect to get so angry, and above all, receiving a kiss from the other man.

For the first time since they started the project, Hannibal had lost his patience, and had let his emotions get the best of it. That was already shameful by itself, although the worst part was that he had gotten so enraged that he resorted to a physical altercation.

That morning, he had woken up early to have the kitchen all for himself. It was a simple breakfast, he just needed to cook the sausages, eggs and add just a little bit of topping. If he had the opportunity, he much preferred controlling what he ate during the day, and maybe sharing his passion for cooking with someone else wouldn't have been so terrible. Will looked very pleased with the meal the last time they met, and that encouraged Hannibal to make even more. Even though he was certainly confident in his cooking, he enjoyed watching other people enjoy it as well (with a fair amount of compliments thrown in).

After finishing in the kitchen, he returned to his room and waited, since he had at least two more hours before the appointment. He decided to draw something to pass the time, and so he sat at his writing desk and pulled out his sketchbook. He flipped through the pages to look for a blank space to start, but suddenly stopped at a particular page.

That sketch of Will Graham, the one that he drew from memory alone, but managed to catch that distinct moment; messier curls than usual, a confused and nervous expression in his eyes, and blood running down to his lips.

Hannibal must admit that it was an unexpected thing to see. He knew his classmate didn't have the best reputation, although he didn't expect him to be so reactive. It seemed that the punch Will received was a shock even for him, and an even bigger shock was seeing Hannibal seconds after that.

Hannibal couldn't tell whether he immediately went to help his classmate, as he much preferred not stressing over other people's business. He may have done it for the sake of seeming friendly, but no, that wasn't just it.

He closed his sketchbook mid thoughts and put it aside, as to not think of the situation any further. He didn't need to analyze the events (or worse, his feelings) at the moment; all he needed to do was get this assignment over in as little time as possible.

Soon time passed, and there was no sight of Will. Incident aside, the other man was almost always on time, sometimes earlier than he needed to if it meant beating Hannibal at something. Hannibal still waited patiently, excusing his tardiness for another emergency.

Fifteen minutes passed. Then thirty. Then more than half. Hannibal's tolerance was thinning at every quarter that passed. During that span, he had opened his sketchbook once more, and had caught himself staring at the portrait of his classmate. That sight didn't help him keep his cool.

It took until eleven o' clock before he heard footsteps outside his door. He didn't want to turn around, instead waiting for Will to do the first move.

Hannibal tried to look unfazed, training his face not to show a single different emotion, but his frustration was ready to come to the surface if he didn't take matters into his own hands in the next few seconds.

He hoped that things could improve once they started working, though Hannibal saw how his classmate wasn't focused enough to get anything done this morning. He looked at the untouched food on the table, another one of the disappointments today, and decided to end their meeting after just one hour of starting.

His mood had only worsened, so Hannibal didn't even try to hide his displeasure in his words. He wanted to make Will feel frustrated too. What he didn't expect was grabbing, blocking, and even cursing at his classmate in anger.

In the heat of the moment, he didn't even realize that he was kissing Will back until he had been pushed away. Will had looked worried, with his reddened mouth open, but not a single sound escaping him.

And just like that, his classmate fled from his room, leaving the situation unresolved.

Things couldn't have possibly ended there, seeing as they couldn't scrap the entire project when there were only two weeks left from the deadline. Hannibal would have been already frustrated by the loss of the project itself, but now, giving it some more thought, he would miss the company of his classmate. It was a frivolous thought, perhaps a product of the previous circumstances, as it hadn't been long since he knew Will.

He roamed around his room deep in thought, until he glanced at his desk and was met with the sketchbook page again. He closed it immediately, trying to push his confusing thoughts away, but this time he couldn't.

Will's words were stuck in his head; he had been called self-centred, too focused on himself to care about others. It wasn't supposed to be how he was to be perceived by others, let alone those that he wanted to keep closer. He realized that Will had unconsciously made him doubt even his own intentions with other people.

He sighed, looking out the window. Unlike other times, he couldn't deal with the situation alone, whether he wanted to or not. He couldn't " *talk to myself in front of a mirror"* like Will had claimed, but at the same time he couldn't risk telling all the story to an outsider.

Maybe there was a person he could somehow confide in, probably the only one for now.

Soon he found himself at the library, where he could most likely find her when she wasn't taking classes. Fortunately for him, there she was; Abigail sat in one of the chairs near the window, plants surrounding her from all angles, the quietest place to sit.

Hannibal took a deep breath, trying to gain his composure back and look as neutral as possible. He cleared his throat to get her attention, and the girl smiled at him.

"Oh, hi Hannibal!" she greeted him as usual, then she furrowed her brows, probably asking herself why he was here. "Something happened?"

It took him a moment to speak; he almost felt embarrassed asking for advice, as everyone always presumed he had the answers for all things.

"Yes. Last time I told you I had some problems with who I was paired with for a project."

Abigail nodded, letting him continue with his speech.

"Well, the situation has worsened, and I must confess that I'm a bit troubled at the moment."

"Do you want to tell me what happened?" Abigail asked, then gestured to the seat next to her. "We can sit and chat if you like."

Hannibal took her suggestion and sat on the blue armchair, glancing over the plants that adorned the space. He couldn't possibly tell her how he got aggressive, nor how their meeting had ended.

"I thought we were starting to work well together. I cooked them food, like you suggested-" Hannibal started to say, and the girl gave a shy smile. "and we even learned more about each other."

He recalled the look of confusion that Will had when he had shoved him away, the almost whispered *"I'm sorry"* after, and the silence that immediately followed.

"Today they had been late to their appointment, I wanted to tell them that I was disappointed in this behavior, but then…" Hannibal paused, remembering the soft feeling of lips against his. "The situation escalated, and I couldn't even ask for explanations."

Abigail then tilted her head to the side, as if thinking of something, before asking him a simple but crucial question:

“Do you care much about this person?”

Hannibal considered this. He wasn’t so sure about the answer, since the two of them had only recently started to talk and put their imaginary rivalry aside. On the other hand, he couldn’t lie that he had started thinking more about the man in the last week, even going as far as drawing him without even noticing it.

“I’m not sure.” Hannibal said honestly. “They’re an interesting person, to say the least.”

“Well, are you interested in them just as a partner for this project, or are you interested in something more? Like, as a friend, for example.”

Considering their strange relationship at the moment, what he and Will had would probably be seen as more than simple classmates, but at the same time couldn’t exactly call what they had a ‘friendship’.

Hannibal said nothing, and while waiting for an answer, Abigail tried to offer a solution. “If you don’t have an idea, you could just put up with them until the project is finished, and then you can decide if you want to keep seeing them or not."

Hannibal then looked at her and contemplated this possibility. He could try to return to a friendly approach with Will, finish their work and see how things turned out, letting fate decide what would happen between them. He much preferred having a rigid scheme to follow, so that he could predict a possible outcome of the situation, but his partner was unpredictable. He’s captivated by the man, although he hasn’t figured out his way of thinking yet.

“Yes, this seems like the best solution. I just hope they will forgive me after what happened.”

“I’m sure they will, you only need to explain your side of the story.” Abigail replied.

Easier said than done , Hannibal thought.

Hannibal then stood up, looking at his watch to see how much time had passed. He only had a class in the afternoon, but he still had much time left before it started. “Thank you, Abigail, I will remember your advice.”

“No problem, and if you need help with anything you can always ask me!” Abigail said. As Hannibal was about to leave the library, the girl then said “Oh, and good luck with Will!”

Hannibal stilled, turning around to look at Abigail as panic began to settle. Did he accidentally tell her his name? Did she see the whole event in secret? No, that couldn’t be.

As if seeing a look of distress on his face, Abigail quickly clarified. “Oh, sorry, I heard about this assignment in the lunchroom by accident. Will was talking with his friends about it.”

Hannibal breathed a sigh of relief and hoped that she wasn’t aware of the whole situation.

“Thank you, Abigail. I’ll tell you how it went someday."

—-----

Will's pov

Will really didn’t know what to think. He left Hannibal's room in a rush, his mind going blank.

He had no clue what he thought about the whole thing: why did he do that? Why did he think it was the appropriate thing to do at that time? Will kept biting his lips, still red from the previous event.

God, he *really* fucked up.

Not only was he his project's partner, but also his classmate, which meant he couldn't avoid him even if he wanted to. What if Hannibal didn't want to see him anymore? Their work wasn’t even done to begin with, so they inevitably needed to see each other again.

Will thought that the best course of action was to ignore; ignore what happened, ignore how that made him feel, ignore the look on Hannibal’s face when deep in anger.

The next morning in class it seemed like nothing ever happened; Will didn’t greet him this time and tried his best to ignore him, although he could feel eyes on him whenever he stood up from his desk. He even caught Hannibal glancing at him during the break, but Will still said nothing.

Beverly also noticed him staring and said to Will: "Hey, I think your friend's trying to get your attention. Why don't you go talk to him?"

He simply shrugged and mumbled something while looking down at his desk, hoping she wouldn't press him further. As expected, she wasn't pleased with this silence.

"Something happened, right?" She crossed her arms and waited for a response from him, but he still couldn’t meet her gaze.

“No I’m just...really stressed about this assignment and I *don’t* want to think about it all the time.” Will said firmly. He would be mortified if Beverly or the others realized what had happened between them. He could already feel the trio telling him ‘*See? He wasn’t so bad after all.’* And especially, It was best not to tell her that the one thing he was always thinking about was that kiss.

“Mmh..” Beverly said skeptically before nodding. “Yeah, I get it. Alana is also nervous even though we’re going next week.”

Will stayed silent and nodded as well; maybe she really believed him, or maybe she was just pretending to. Either way, he would rather not talk about it at all. They both returned to their seats once the bell rang, and fortunately for him the subject was no longer brought up that day.

Some days passed, and Will once again ignored Hannibal during lessons. He knew that confronting him was inevitable, and they were running out of time to finish their assignment,

but after that day Will couldn’t even bear to look him in the eyes.

Will had ignored Hannibal for the past few days. Or at least, had tried to. What he didn’t expect was for his classmate to walk up to him and greet him like usual.

“Good morning, Will.” Will briefly glanced up at him; Hannibal was smiling, his mood impossible to tell. Was he angry at him? Disappointed?

"Hi, Lecter."

"You've probably been busy these days, but the deadline is getting close. I would like to finish our project as soon as possible."

Will was taken aback a little; he thought that Hannibal wouldn't want to talk to him again, that he would want to change partners even after all this time.

"Sorry.” That was all he could say at the moment. *Sorry for what happened that day.*

“What if we continue where we left?” Hannibal had said, and Will tensed in his seat. *Continue? As if pushed against the wal-*

“With our project, I mean.” Hannibal clarified.

Will shook his head and cleared his throat. *Stop making it worse, Graham.*

“Yeah sure. Whenever you like.” He nodded, fidgeting with the pen in his hand.

“We can meet in my room after lunch." Hannibal continued. *After lunch.* So he wouldn't make him lunch like before. Not after last time. It would have been better if the two of them had continued in a different place, maybe one where there could be other people.

One where they didn’t need to be alone, a possible opportunity to discuss their feelings. *Anything but that.*

Will quickly discarded that thought and answered "That's fine." He wouldn't want to anger his classmate again, so he went along with everything he suggested.

He met Hannibal’s eyes for the first time in a while, grateful that the conversation was over. Hannibal smiled again, a possible look of satisfaction in his face.

The only thing Will needed to do before the meeting was composing himself; at that rate, he was afraid he would say something that he would end up regretting later.

Will stood in front of Hannibal's door, debating whether to knock or pretend to have never been there in the first place. Maybe he was still in time to fake being sick and miss the meeting, saying that he was so ill that-

No, Hannibal wouldn't have certainly forgiven him then.

He gave some hesitant knocks on the door and swallowed down his nerves, hoping his classmate wasn't there, that he himself had forgotten about the appointment.

Unfortunately, Hannibal opened the door and greeted him with a slight smile. "Hi Will, do come in."

Will mumbled a quiet "thanks" before stepping in. He noticed a closed notebook on the bed, a red pencil sticking out of it. Something similar to where the sketch of himself was.

"Sorry if I bothered you while you were reading."

"Don't worry, I was just killing time while waiting for you. Shall we begin?"

They both sat at the table, one in front of the other like always. They didn't talk for a while, both concentrated on their own tasks; it was better for Will to focus on other things rather than the person facing him.

The silence was interrupted by Hannibal clearing his throat and closing his book.

"So, Will, I have something to ask you."

Will froze; he knew Hannibal didn't easily forget about it.

"I've been thinking about our last meeting."

Will felt his breath quicken. "Hannibal,I-"

"Why your sudden outburst?"

Will raised his eyes to meet Hannibal's, but couldn't exactly respond; in that moment, he just felt the sudden urge to kiss him, nothing else. He didn't have a reason to, so not even an explanation for it.

"Look, I was confused." Will began to explain. "I was just...really angry and I couldn't think straight."

This almost felt like an excuse rather than a true response. He bit his lips, remembering how they felt at the moment of the kiss.

"Sorry for insulting you. Nothing personal."

His classmate gave him a smile. "It's nothing."

When Will thought he could relax a little, to dismiss the topic of kissing, but then Hannibal asked "Did it mean something to you?"

"Wha-"

"The kiss. Did it mean something?"

Did it?

After all, they weren't even friends. It was true that he found himself thinking about his classmate for some time, but he couldn't possibly call it a crush. He just felt like he wanted to learn more about him, that's it.

Right?

Will glanced at Hannibal, who was waiting for a response. He found that he couldn't quite read the expression on Hannibal's face.

If he actually said that there was the slight possibility that it meant something more, Hannibal could have easily responded that it wasn't the same for him, that he didn't care at all about what happened.

He stayed silent for a while, then slowly shook his head and replied "No, it didn't mean anything. I hope I didn't ruin our relationship."

“You don't have to worry about it." Hannibal said, although Will noticed a sort of hesitance in his voice. "If you want, we can pretend it never happened."

Difficult to forget, Will thought, but instead he simply nodded.

"Yeah, let's do that."

Despite saying that, he couldn't quite put a finger on why he felt a strange feeling in gut, like somehow he had said the wrong thing.

No, he definitely made the right choice in the long run. Or at least, he hoped so.

Chapter End Notes

> Yes, I'm sure repressing all your feelings would be the best option. Nothing bad will happen!!

River Flows In You

Chapter Notes

> Hello sorry for making you wait! This chapter is again from Will's point of view. Also beware for some light angst and lots of unprocessed feelings that these two idiots can't seem to get through- (I swear it gets better I promise)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's pov

Weeks had passed, everything seemed like back to normal; the project was almost finished, no signs of disagreement between the pair. They even managed to learn more about the other, and could switch from working hard to talking casually about things. Hannibal never cooked for him again, but it was fine, it's nothing that Will couldn't live without.

The meetings were always in Hannibal's room, where everything was quieter than what Will was used to. No roommates, no people chatting amongst themselves like in the library; just the two of them, the only noises coming from the animals outside the windows.

Everything looked like before. At least, for Hannibal.

But not for Will.

He had started out this project with only feelings of annoyance, even nervousness when realizing that he was forced to work with someone like Hannibal. At first, they seemed like the complete opposite, two personalities that couldn't go along together. Will supposed that their teamwork would have ended up coinciding with their rivalry; one would try to surpass the other, even if they were going to present the same thing. As time passed, Will had to put aside his pride, since constantly clashing with his partner wouldn't have any benefits in the long run. And so he tried to get closer to Hannibal, the same way as the other man did.

Will wasn't fond of changes, like having to try something new without knowing if he already liked it or not. That was the same for new people; he had a close group of friends that had stayed with him since starting university, and that barely ever changed.

However, as he initially forced himself to get along with Hannibal, soon he didn't even have to try. He found himself genuinely enjoying spending time with his classmate, learning things he would have never known if Hannibal didn't educate him on that.

They talked about art, music, philosophy, basically everything that would come up during their project.

Will had started to see a more sincere side of him, and Hannibal seemed more human. He didn't seem like he was putting on a mask. Not with him, at least. He had heard him laugh at one of his stupid jokes one time, and Will almost couldn't believe that he was capable of laughing.

As he pretended to stay just "partners", maybe even friends, there was an ache inside of him that wouldn't go away. He didn't know why, but those feelings had appeared after their fight. After the kiss.

Hannibal looked fine, like he had forgotten all about the accident. He was friendly as always, never leaning away from his calm demeanor.

Will couldn't help but feel a little disappointed in that. He was having all those doubts inside his head, while Hannibal didn't seem affected in the slightest. Sometimes he wished he could see his thoughts, to pick his mind apart and hear what Will couldn't dare to ask.

Will tried to push those thoughts away, deep down where they couldn't come to the surface. He just needed to bare until the day of their presentation, then he would have time to calmly think things through.

Even his friends said they noticed a change in him. They said he looked more cheerful, perhaps more relaxed. Will didn't realize that there had been that much of a difference, aside from his recurring reflections. Maybe Hannibal really did have an impact on him, but that, he wouldn't ever admit it.

Soon it was their turn for the presentation. They had been preparing since the first group started, refining and removing every possible error. They heard all their friends go first, and Mrs.Du Maurier had probably put them last to see how much they could come up with. They were the best in her class after all.

Will was nervous, because no matter how many times he rehearsed with Hannibal and *knew* that he had memorized the speech from memory, he always feared that anxiety would get the better of him and forget everything as soon as he approached the blackboard.

He was shaken from his thoughts when he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned around, only to see Hannibal giving him a warm smile. Will unconsciously smiled back, and felt a weight off him; a simple gesture from Hannibal really could help him feel better.

When they got up on stage, Will glanced around the room; he hated having all the attention on himself. He looked at his friends, who were giving him thumbs up and whispered words of encouragement. Last, he looked at his partner next to him.

He wasn't alone in this. If Will forgot his speech, Hannibal would have helped him and picked right up from where he left.

Will took a deep breath, then began his speech. To keep himself focused, he usually concentrated his gaze on something, like a random object, or even his own feet. This time, it wasn't an object he found in the room, but the subject of his stare was Hannibal. He didn't

seem agitated in the slightest, rather looked very comfortable explaining in front of the entire class.

As they continued their discourse, they started finishing sentences for one another, or even simply catching where the other one was going with the discussion.

When they got to the last slide, they both stayed silent and looked at each other, both waiting for the other to finish the last part of the project. Hannibal nodded at him, as signing to continue on. It was at that moment that Will understood that something shifted. He trusted Hannibal, and hoped that it was the same for him.

“And that’s about all we have for today.” Will finally said, dragging his eyes across the room to see his classmates’ reactions.

It was silent for a moment, until the professor gave a small clap, and soon others followed.

“Great job. I can see that you both gave the best of yourselves.” Bedelia added.

Will breathed a sigh of relief, letting out the quietest thank you he could say. To whom he was saying thank you, he didn’t know. He was glad that the project was over, everything went well. All his efforts weren’t wasted.

Then, he realized something else.

The project was over, and that meant that he and Hannibal didn’t need to inevitably see each other anymore. It was the end of the semester, so they didn’t even have classes together. Hannibal could have pretended to not know him and forget about him in an instant. Like he was a total stranger.

He turned around towards his classmate again, but this time he couldn’t read Hannibal’s expression, like he had somehow put the mask back on.

Little by little, the students exited the room, chatting amongst each other on what they could do to celebrate. Will only processed them as background noises, some disturbances for his train of thoughts that were racing in that exact moment. Hannibal was stopped from Mrs. Du Maurier, who was congratulating them once again. He smiled at her, but different from the way he did with Will.

His classmate needed praise, but maybe he didn’t need another person to stay close to.

Will tried to fled the room, to go to a quieter place where his brain wouldn’t run so fast to conclusion, where he could pretend to forget all about thi-

“Will.”

He stopped in his tracks and turned around, and saw Hannibal with a confused expression on his face. His mask seemed to have slipped again. Only with him.

“I was going to ask you if you wanted to celebrate. With me.”

This caught Will off guard, halting his doubts for a second. They were friends, him and Hannibal, weren't they?

"Do you have something else to do?" Hannibal asked.

Will shook his head quickly. He felt a feeling of relief. He didn't need to dig deeper to see if Hannibal had other intentions to be nicer after everything had finished. Maybe Will could have this delusion going on for another while.

"Uh no, certainly not." Will replied.

As to avoid any silence between the two of them, he quickly added "Do you want to go drink something? I know a place we can go."

Hannibal smiled at him. "Of course. We make a great team, after all."

—-------

"Are you sure you can walk to the door?" Hannibal asked jokingly.

"I only drank two beers, I can do fine on my own." Will had replied, proving exactly the contrary by almost tripping on his own feet.

Hannibal helped him keep his balance by placing his hand on his back and guiding him to the room by taking Will's hand. The alcohol wasn't strong enough to cover the flare of heat that raised from his touch on him.

Will then slumped on one of Hannibal's armchairs, his head lolling side to side.

"Rest for a bit, I will play you a melody."

Will couldn't help but huff a laugh. "How romantic of you, Lecter."

Maybe he needed to shut up before he said something inappropriate.

He closed his eyes when he heard the first notes playing, the melody slowly calming Will's senses. He opened them again to see Hannibal playing the piano, expertly fingers touching the piano keys. He wished he could stay in his classmate's room for longer and hear him play other songs for him, for however long he wanted.

"Is that *River Flows In You* you're playing?" Will asked, getting up from his seat.

"Didn't know you knew Yiruma." Hannibal replied.

"I know a lot more things than you can imagine."

Will then sat alongside Hannibal at the piano. "Can I try for a bit?"

He touched some random notes, making the most atrocious and ungraceful sounds he had ever heard, and heard Hannibal laughing at his side. Hannibal then took one of his hands in

his, guiding him on the right keys.

“I’m terrible at this.” Will claimed, but Hannibal shook his head and chuckled.

“You just need a little bit of practice. And patience.”

Will then turned his head towards Hannibal, completely disregarding where his fingers were touching.

This up close, he started noticing small details about the other man’s profile; the prominent cheekbones, the small scar at the top of his nose, and the most noticeable thing,being his lips. Soft and thin lips, that felt so good pressed against his. Beautiful, as always.

His drunken mind had once again shifted to that time. It was something he thought about often, despite reprimanding himself over it.

“Do I have something on my face, Will?” Hannibal teased, as he turned around to meet his gaze.

Will gathered all the possible coherent thoughts at the moment. He could stay vague, saying that there was actually something on him. Instead, all in one breath he asked “Did the kiss mean something to you?”

“Is the alcohol talking for you or you’re genuinely asking me?”

“I’m as serious as I can be.” Will firmly said.

Hannibal looked at their conjoined hands, not responding at first.

“To be honest, I wasn’t expecting it.” Hannibal started to say. “I didn’t know what to think at the moment.”

“So what do you think now? If I kissed you right now, what would you think?” Will asked, eyebrows furrowed. He shifted closer to Hannibal, their hands still one on top of the other. Maybe he was pushing far too much, but was curious to see what would happen.

“Why the topic all of the sudden?”

“Because-” Will paused, thinking of the best possible way to explain himself. “Because I’ve been thinking about it for a while. We’ve gotten closer, and I realized that I really, *really* enjoy spending time with you.”

Hannibal looked at him, not saying anything and instead let him continue.

“I’m just saying I…would *really* like to kiss you. Again.” Will finally said, before leaning even closer to him.

They both stayed silent, closing even more distance between them, neither of them backing up until their lips met again.

It started out as something soft, only a gentle press to his mouth, until Will felt Hannibal's hands on his cheeks, cupping his face as he deepened the kiss. Will hesitantly slid his fingers up his classmate's thighs, as if afraid that he might just slip away at any moment, and in response Hannibal stuffed one hand into Will's curls, making him shiver all over.

Hannibal broke away from the kiss, making Will stand up with him and leaving him with a troubled expression for a second. This feeling was quickly forgotten when Hannibal cupped one of Will's cheeks again, as well as curling the other hand against one of Will's hips, making their bodies so close to each other.

This time, it was Hannibal who closed the distance between them. The kiss had gotten desperate, just like last time, with Will's tongue clumsily brushing against Hannibal's teeth. Will staggered backwards, but was supported by Hannibal who continued to grip him from his waist, until the back of Will's legs touched the soft side of the bed.

Will laid himself onto the mattress, immediately followed by Hannibal towering over him, his arms at either side of Will's hips. Will gasped against the other man's mouth, one of his hands gripping Hannibal's back when he moved slightly on the bed and accidentally created friction between the two of them. Will chased the sensation with a little rut upwards, immediately going back to kissing Hannibal as he moved again and again. It was something so simple, the barest hint of contact between them, but Will couldn't help but want more from this. He wanted this, as much as his partner did, with the way Hannibal kept making low noises every time they kissed.

They both wanted this.

Or maybe,

It wasn't the case.

Will suddenly stiffened when a particular thrust had made his crotch grind against Hannibal's, making him feel how the kiss had affected the both of them. He placed a hand over Hannibal's chest to stop him, his fingers gripping the shirt hard.

"Wait, stop-" Will mumbled, slowly putting some distance between him and Hannibal. "Stop for a second-."

Throughout all of this exchange, there was something missing.

Hannibal hadn't answered his question after all.

"Something's wrong?" Hannibal asked, his voice gone lower than usual.

Will looked away from his face, not being able to think clearly if he continued looking at his classmate in that state. He scooted out from under Hannibal, Will's warm body coming in contact with the cold wall at the end of the bed.

"No, I-" Will began to say. He acted selfish this time, not waiting for a response from the other person and only taking what *he* desired.

“I’m sorry, you don’t need to go along with this if you don’t want to.”

“Why do you think I don’t want to?”

“Because-” Will mumbles, looking everywhere but Hannibal. “I don’t want to do anything if you feel obliged to do it. I didn’t even have a response before I kissed you.”

“You didn’t have one last time either.”

Before Hannibal could further explain, Will shook his head, quickly getting up from the bed and running towards the door.

“I’m sorry, please forget about it-”

“Will-” Hannibal called out, taking his wrist to stop him from going. They were in the middle of the hallway. Alone. Once again. “Do you want to talk about it, after all?”

Will finally faced Hannibal, staring mournfully at him. Hannibal looked hurt as well, but he wasn’t in the right mind to explain all of his feelings for him at the moment. He wanted to ask so many questions, but was afraid of the possible answers. He rather not know anything, if the response meant a rejection.

“Maybe we went too fast.” Will claimed, as he adjusted his shirt that had previously fallen off his shoulder. “I think we should take it easy. If it’s even possible between us.”

His heart was pounding, his brain overheating, but he fought hard to maintain his composure. He had so many emotions going through him, even if he couldn’t find the courage to tell him.

“See you around, Lecter.”

Will then walked away, refusing to see what expression his classmate had on when he said the last sentence.

As he walked down the hallway, he saw Freddie Lounds looking down at her camera, searching through various photos. When he passed in front of her, she smiled at him, but he didn’t smile back. The last thing he would want was to get an article written out of him.

She never minded her business to begin with, and if she started asking him questions, he would just be even more irritated.

As if the situation wasn’t frustrating enough already.

Chapter End Notes

There's a lot of confusion and misunderstanding between these two BUT I'm sure there will be something that will make them even closer ;) Stay tuned for the next chapter!

We're finally getting close to the ending :))
(Ps. I'm going on vacation this week, so sorry if the next chapter takes a while to finish!)

Scoop

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry for my absence, but I'm back with another long chapter! Thank you so much for your nice comments on this, I didn't know if this silly fic would be appreciated ;v;
Also I made an "edit" to go with this chapter with a possible face claim for the two! (aka: I imagine Will looking like Hugh in Blood and Chocolate, and Hannibal as Mads in Shake It All About. But that's just how I see them in this, you can have your own intepretation!)
Enjoy the chapter!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was the end of the semester; most students had gotten home to their families, while others stayed back on campus to focus on their exams. Hallways were filled with people mindlessly running around with books in their hand and a high dose of caffeine in their system. Over all, it was a stressful time for many, including Will. However, he wasn't worried about exams, rather something else.

He stayed in his room for most of the day, occasionally leaving it only to go out with his friends, then back in his bed again. He used that time to study, nights spent remembering formulas and descriptions when he wasn't able to close his eyes and rest.

While he was so deeply concentrated in his studies, he also dwelled on things, a lot. His thoughts were all scrambled, catching himself thinking back on the past few months when he was supposed to memorize paragraph after paragraph of information for his courses. He tried to find an explanation through all of this thinking, but at the end he would get so caught up in his fears that he would be back to square one, left without a solution to his problems. And so he came to a conclusion: just wait, and everything would eventually go away.

He hadn't seen Hannibal again, not since the day of their presentation. He didn't meet him when he passed down the hallways, nor during meals in the lunchroom. Will often wondered what would happen if they met again.

He would have wanted to see him again, but he could never find the courage to contact him back. And now, for some cruel joke of destiny (or perhaps,a blessing), they hadn't seen each other since then. Not even once.

On the other hand, Hannibal hadn't reached out to him either. Some parts of Will wished that his classmate could be the one to make the first step, to talk about the situation first. Although in this case, it was Will who was in the wrong.

He had fled away a second time, only because he didn't want to face the possible negative consequences.

He enjoyed their kiss, the way that Hannibal felt over him, his body against his. The other man seemed compliant at first, even though his face didn’t convey any particular emotion.

Will had some regrets with how he had left things. He wondered what could have happened if he hadn't left the room that day. Maybe they could have gone further. Or maybe Hannibal would have realized that all of that wasn't worth it, and kicked him out of his place instead. There were too many possibilities, and Will didn’t want to risk it at that time.

When he would lay awake at night, when it was only him and his thoughts alone, he often imagined different endings of the situation, if a small detail could have changed everything. Sometimes, when he would desperately roll around his bed trying to catch some sleep, he would picture how it would feel to have Hannibal next to him.

Would his touch help him relax? Would he play a lullaby to calm him if he slept in Hannibal's room? He wished he could hear that piano again, and found himself with notes of the song replaying in his head. Sometimes (actually, very often at night), he pretended that things worked out.

As weeks passed and the last exams approached, Will's sleep schedule had worsened significantly; he could barely concentrate on the textbooks, sometimes risking falling asleep on his desk. He had also catched himself being more snappy towards others, and his friends had also noticed his temperament.

However, when they asked if something happened, he would always dismiss all the questions with "It's just stress for exams season. Don't worry about it."

The trio seemed to be unaware of all the things that had happened since starting the assignment, and Will preferred that things stayed that way. They didn't need to know all the emotions that Hannibal had made him feel in such a short amount of time. He was afraid that they would laugh at him, or maybe one of them would nod their head and say “I told you he was nice.”

Beverly, contrary to Zeller and Price who were content with Will's response, didn't buy his charade.

One day she had pulled him to one side as he was leaving one of their hangouts, and in the most serious tone Will had ever heard her sound, she said "We need to talk."

And so they met at the library the next day, choosing the quiet place near one of the big windows, two blue armchairs shielded by plants. Will tapped nervously on the side of his seat. Beverly, sitting across him and with her arms folded, looked at him with a scolding face. The scene looked like a mother lecturing his son for doing something wrong.

"Look, you might deceive those two idiots, but you can't fool me." Beverly explained. "What happened this time?"

Will shifted on his seat, fidgeting with his jacket's sleeve to find something to distract himself.

He took a deep breath, then started explaining what happened. In broad terms, at least. He couldn't put into words the feeling of having Hannibal so close. He couldn't also explain in detail what had happened during the kiss.

Beverly listened closely, never interrupting Will, only nodding to sign to continue on.

"...And that's how we haven't talked in a while." Will finally finished, looking at the plants that adorned his seat. He sighed, like a weight has been lifted off of him.

His friend didn't respond right away, instead humming and nodding her head to recount what Will just said.

"One thing is clear- you're an idiot." She finally claimed.

"I didn't know if he felt the same way!"

"Of course he did!" Beverly groaned, putting a hand on her face. "Will, by how you told me things, he clearly likes you back. He would have thrown you out the minute that you tried getting closer, don't you think?"

Will thought about it for a second. He glanced at her, then back to the window.

"I only thought of the worst case scenarios, so I thought I didn't have a chance to begin with." He mumbled, refusing to look at his friend.

"Yeah, because you're an idiot." Beverly pointed out again. "You should just go find him, talk things through and then you can be all-"

"Hi guys, sorry for interrupting you."

The two turned around, and saw Alana approaching them. Will internally thanked her, as she arrived at the perfect time to stop them from having this difficult conversation.

She looked at Beverly, then said: "I met Mrs. Du Maurier earlier and she told me that she will be putting our grades next week." Alana turned to Will next, giving him a warm smile. "Also Will, congratulations! I didn't know you had a boyfriend!"

Will's heart sank, his breath hitched.

He looked at Alana wide-eyed, then back at Beverly, who was looking at him all confused.

"Um, what are you referring to?" Will managed to say, his voice almost trembling. He tapped foot in order to relieve tension, but it didn’t help

"Oh, did I get it wrong? Because I read the article on Freddie's site. Didn't you read it?"

Beverly shook her head, beginning to explain. "Of course not, we don't look at any of her stuf-"

"Alana, what article?" Will pressed further, trying to sound as calm as possible.

Alana said nothing, instead pulling out her phone and typing a few things on it, only to reveal a page from the University's journal.

“Oh, god.” Will mumbled to himself.

He sat right up, the chair making a screeching sound from the sheer speed of his movement.

He had to leave, immediately.

His gaze passed from Beverly to Alana, not sure what excuse he could give to leave immediately. He took a shuddering breath, then shook his head.

"Sorry, I have another thing to do.” Will simply said, his voice coming out barely a whisper.

He then hurried out of the room, his anxiety flaring up, his brain running so fast. As he was approaching the door, he heard the girls talking between themselves:

"Is he okay?" Alana asked.

"Yeah, I will explain it all to you another time." Beverly had replied.

—---

Will could see others were looking at him as he crossed the hallways, secretly judging as if they all knew the real story behind that article. Why should they care anyways?

This situation only meant having all the attention on him, as people would probably go up to him and ask him stupid questions. It was always like this, when Freddie would publish a page about someone in particular; the person would get the annoying and judgemental stares for a week, speculations going around, then it would all go away when she would pick another subject. It was just a matter of time, but even one day more was torture for Will. He always made sure not to attract unwanted eyes on him, trying to keep all things for himself, and just in a matter of seconds, one of his deepest “secrets” had gone public.

It wasn’t the fact that people would speculate on his sexuality, as he had no problem coming out to anyone, but the person that was *mentioned* with him.

As he approached his locker to get his stuff, a doubt popped up in Will’s mind.

Did Hannibal read the article?

Like Will did, the man always minded his business, but he would have been at least aware of some of the news on campus. If he knew about this, was he worried about it? Would his reputation change from now on?

No one had seen him being friendly with someone, let alone having a romantic relationship, so that was even bigger news.

How did he react to the scoop? Would he be frustrated with Freddie, or perhaps, with Will? He was the one to rush out of the room and get them in trouble, after all.

“Will Graham, what a coincidence to see you.”

Will turned around, and saw Freddie herself approaching him, her arms folded and a smug expression on her face. No, this was not the right time for this.

“Did you like my story? I made sure to pick your best angle.” she teased.

Will didn’t respond, not even sparing a glance at her direction.

Freddie insistently asked Will what was his relationship with Hannibal, telling him that everyone had noticed a certain "flirting" during their philosophy presentation and how it was weird that they had just recently been hanging out a lot together.

As she kept rambling on, Will was getting frustrated, frustrated at the fact that everyone didn't mind their own business, how it was easy for others to judge based on the very little moments they saw, and especially how things were slowly getting out of hand. He himself didn't even know how to put it, let alone talk about it with someone who didn't know him. Someone like *her* in all of this.

He kept shoving some of his books in the locker and let out a sigh. "Don't you have anyone else to bother right now, Freddie?"

Freddie clicked her tongue. "Your way of acting it's very telling, whether you like it or not."

He glared at her, hoping she would soon leave him alone. "Maybe I could write an article about it. Also, you should learn how to manage your anger, it seems like you'd need it."

Will gritted his teeth, trying not to let his irritation get the best of him. Everyone seemed to like getting on his nerves these days. He took a deep breath; punching someone didn’t work out last time, and neither would function now.

“You should probably leave, before you need to write a story about my anger.” Will said in a flat tone.

She shrugged, then left immediately after, a smile still plastered on her face.

As soon as Freddie was out of his sight, he finished stuffing all the books, not caring if they would bend, and closed the closet. Well,tried to.

The volumes kept the door open, and instead of arranging them neatly, the textbooks were thrown in without much care. He pushed it close one, two, three times, each time with more annoyance, but it wouldn't close.

“Oh for fuck’s sake- ” Exasperated, he slammed his fist into the door, finally shutting it tight, only to immediately feel a sharp pain to his hand. He hissed, feeling it pulsating, and gripped it with his other hand. Great, just what he needed on top of all the other things.

He looked at his knuckles, red and slightly swollen, unable to move his fingers. He wasn’t sure what to do with his injury; he considered self-medicating, but it would’ve been the same as not treating it. He thought of calling Beverly, but he already bothered her enough with his constant complaints. Plus, Alana would probably still be around her at this point.

He picked up his backpack, hand still aching, his feet moving on his own, and without much thought he wandered around the campus, until he found himself in front of a door.

Hannibal’s door.

It probably wasn’t the best idea to ask for help from the person he so hard tried to push away. He was a coward, not wanting to admit his feelings but running to him as soon as he had a problem.

It was best to ignore him for a couple of days, weeks even, as to erase and really pretend nothing had happened, putting away all of his emotions for the last time. Yet here he was, Hannibal being the first that came to mind that could help him. He had treated him the first time they had a meeting, and Will was hoping that it would be the same as the last time.

He knocked on the door with his (intact) hand before bringing it back to his other one in an attempt to hide the swelling.

The door swung open and Hannibal looked at him, eyebrows raised in surprise. "Hello, Will. Do you need anything?"

Will glanced to his side, avoiding direct eye contact. Now that he was actually in front of Hannibal, he found it difficult talking to him. Images from their previous encounter flashed through his mind.

"Yeah, I…I need your help. Um..." Will started playing with the cuff of his sweater, letting his reddened hand exposed. Hannibal noticed it and glanced between that and Will's face.

Will sighed before saying "You know how to treat an injury, right?"

Hannibal simply nodded and replied "Yes, it depends on which kind." He moved out of the entrance and glanced another time to Will’s hand. "Let me see what I can do."

—

"Sit on the bed."

To Hannibal's orders, Will sat on the edge of the bed, feeling like he was an unwanted guest. He looked at his classmate searching through a small cabinet, only to turn around with bandages and an ointment in hand.

Hannibal sat alongside him, carefully taking his hand in his and examining it. He pressed light touches to the knuckles which made Will flinch, so he then opted to put a cooling cream on his hand and gently massaging it with his thumb. Will felt a sense of guilt about making Hannibal treat him, but at the same time he liked the sensation of Hannibal's fingers on his.

There was a certain softness in the way his classmate was touching him, and Will couldn't help but feel a bit content about it.

After a few minutes of silence, Hannibal asked "Why did you come here, Will?"

Snapping from his relaxed state, Will glanced up and opened his mouth to respond, but he couldn't seem to find an appropriate answer. "I don't know how to treat this." he answered.

"There's an infirmary for that." Hannibal pointed out.

"I know, but it's on the other side of the campus."

"So I was your other option?"

“..You treated my wounds before, I hoped you would help me again.” Will confessed after a sigh. “I know it’s selfish of me, after…”

After how I treated you.

Hannibal stopped tracing his thumb on Will's knuckles, keeping it still on the back of his hand. "Have you come here after the article?"

Will tensed in his seat and snapped his head up, making eye contact with Hannibal for the first time since he arrived.

“I-I’m sorry, it’s my fault that people are talking about it-” Will stammered as he tried to snatch his hand away and get up, but Hannibal firmly gripped his wrist, careful not to touch the injured part of him.

“It doesn’t bother me.” Hannibal said simply, an undefined expression on his face. “The article doesn’t bother me, and neither do you.”

Will let Hannibal’s words sink in. “It…doesn’t bother you?” He asked carefully, because he was not sure he heard him right.

“No, I’m rather...intrigued, by this whole situation.”

Will sat down again, gazing at Hannibal’s face. His expression was neutral, although there was a sparkle in his eyes that wasn’t there before.

“You drank a bit, and I could tell that you weren’t thinking perfectly clear.” Hannibal explained, loosening the grip on Will’s wrist, but still brushing his fingers on Will’s arm with a light touch. “I was afraid that you would regret it once sober if we moved forward, so I just let you do whatever you wanted, and would have stopped at any moment.”

Will kept quiet, as he felt his stomach flip. He widened his eyes, while his mind started to process and connect all that information. Hannibal wasn't forced to do that, but instead would have gone along with him if only Will had let him?

Hannibal watched Will expectantly as he looked everywhere but at him; it was obvious that Will wasn't going to speak first, too busy making sense of all of this, so he continued. "And for the article, I'm not upset with you, maybe just a little with Freddie. Although, It seems that it definitely concerns you."

Will slipped out from Hannibal's touch, only to rub his face with his hands. "No I'm not concerned, I'm just-" he groaned, laying down on the bed as he shielded his eyes with his palm. "It's none of their fucking business if we are going out with each other." Or rather, not going out, at that moment.

"So, you would like to go out with me?" Hannibal asked simply.

"W-what?!" Will glanced up from his position, blushing crimson over his cheeks. Hannibal gazed at him with caring eyes, slightly smiling.

"You already kissed me two times. I suppose you feel something towards me, whether it's just a simple affection or not."

Will sat up with his legs crossed and knees brushing against Hannibal's. He barely could admit to himself that he was interested in the man, let alone trying to find a label for his feelings towards him. He had enjoyed Hannibal's company numerous times, and would have certainly liked to do more. He felt an attraction to him, but couldn't put a name to it yet. He didn't want to force anything. Ever. He only hoped Hannibal would feel the same way he did.

"I think…I might like you. More than project partners, I mean." Will finally confessed. "I want to hear you play the piano again, and taste your amazing meals, and.." He paused, looking at Hannibal with a loving expression. "I want to see you more."

He tried to pour all of his heart into his words, then stayed still, analyzing every possible change of expression in Hannibal. His heart was beating so loud that maybe even Hannibal could hear it.

Then, his classmate slowly nodded, looking him up and down. "You interest me, Will. You show your emotions so clearly, even if you don't notice it yourself."

Will blushed at that, returning to look elsewhere instead of him. He couldn't say the same for Hannibal, as the man was almost impossible to decipher at times.

"I'm not fond of people often, but I feel like you're different. In some ways, you understand me." Hannibal pointed out, getting closer to Will. "I would like to see you more,too. We don't have to go too fast this time."

Will couldn't help but smile, and Hannibal smiled back. All his doubts had dissipated, now that he finally got an answer to them. He had been so stuck in his own world that he hadn't

had the chance to hear Hannibal's side of the story.

"It's a deal, then." Will responded, squeezing Hannibal's hand with his healed one. He then frowned, and said "But what do we do about Freddie?"

Hannibal tucked his fingers under Will's chin, big blue eyes focused on him. "I think we should give her exactly what she wants."

He then moved forward, leaving a chaste kiss on Will's lip. "We should be the lovely couple that she wrote about. Don't you think so, darling?"

Will's eyes widened at the pet name, and turned his head to the side, not being able to look at him for longer, his cheeks feeling redder than ever. "A-alright, I get it."

"Like this, you can kiss me whenever you want to."

"Yes, I know." Will said, voice slightly trembling trying to maintain his excitement.

"Do you want to kiss now?"

Will glanced at him, pouting, but then slowly nodded. "...Yes, I would very much like that."

Chapter End Notes

We did it!! We're almost at the end of this fic, next I'm going to write about their life as a new couple, them getting revenge on other people, and having some spicy time between themselves ;)
See you (hopefully) soon!

Comfort

Chapter Notes

Aaand we're back! Thank you once again to all the people who stuck around until the end, I'm glad people like this silly au I started years ago!
This chapter is a whole lot longer than the others, but I felt like it needed a proper conclusion being the longest fanfic I've written so far.
(I made the rating explicit due to the graphic smut starting from the middle of the chapter, it wouldn't be one of my stories without it-)
Also I added a look to the future at the end of the chapter, since I think we all deserved a nice happy ending ;')
Other than that, please enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Weeks had passed, and the two of them had started publicly going out. They went on dates, often having meals together, whether it would be in Hannibal's bedroom or in one of the nice restaurants that Hannibal knew.

Will didn't like public affection very much, especially in crowded places, but he would often try to kiss or hug Hannibal whenever Freddie was around watching, just for the sake of pissing her off.

Will much preferred being close to his partner in the intimacy of their room, where the two of them would pass the time simply embracing one another. Will liked putting his head on Hannibal's chest, feeling the other man's fingers petting his curls, and would often fall asleep like this, just in the comfort of his presence.

When Freddie would glance at them, she would roll her eyes, frustrated that they weren't the *new scoop* for her site. She didn't seem affected that her article ended up being true, although not all people got used quickly to the new couple.

Will hated having attention on him, while on the other hand Hannibal was perfectly at ease with it. Whenever Will would complain about the amount of work he had to do, Hannibal would tuck the loose curls that would frame his face behind his ear, then stroke Will's cheek until the man would lose track of what he was saying, ending with a flustered face and a calmer tone.

Hannibal would do this whenever he could, whether it was in public or not.

He would also look at him with a love-struck gaze and a warm smile when Will talked about something he liked, carefully listening but not intervening until he was finished.

They hadn't put a label on their relationship yet, especially since none of them were in a rush to find a name for it. They were taking things slow as they tried to adjust to this new shared routine. They would see each other during breaks in their studies, even just for simply having the other one around.

Zeller had asked Will to organize a double date with him and Price (including Beverly, who was happy to make the third wheel if it meant getting to know Hannibal). Will couldn't say no to him, especially after his friends had been so kind to him and had put up with all his complaints when they still weren't officially together. Not that they were now, technically.

The meeting was going well, Hannibal quickly adapting to the trio's dynamics. His humor was a little bit different from theirs, but that didn't stop him from chiming in to their conversations.

All was going well, until Price asked them a particular question.

"So, what are you two? Boyfriends? Something more casual?"

Will froze, his heart beating fast in his chest as he looked between his friends.

He then looked at Hannibal, who was gazing at him with a calm expression. They hadn't talked about this, since he didn't want to push Hannibal into anything if the other man didn't want to.Will had confessed that he wanted to see him more, and Hannibal had said the same. The time that they spent together surely meant something for both of them, right?

Hannibal gave him a slight nod of the head, like he could read what Will was thinking.

Will then turned over his friends, and nodded as well. "Yes, we are…boyfriends."

The word made his cheeks heat, and he mocked himself for the sensation. He could see Beverly giving him a slight smile, looking proud that Will had finally figured out his relationship with Hannibal.

"Well, then we need to celebrate the new couple, don't you think?" Zeller proposed, and the other two hummed in approval.

"It's nothing fancy, Lecter, sorry about that."

"I'm fine with anything, don't you worry."

And so Hannibal fitted in the group like he was there from the beginning, not talking much but always welcomed to join them if he felt like it.

During one of their outings, they talked about the infamous article again, the one that had started it all, and how Freddie had not published any new shocking scoop since then.

Chilton had then passed near them, giving them a side-eye as he walked past them with his group of friends.

"Do you think he will ever stop having a stick up his ass?" Beverly asked.

"Not until someone puts him in his place."

Suddenly, an idea crossed Will's mind. He will find a way to get his revenge even on him.

—--

Will had racked his brain all day trying to come up with a plan to put Chilton on the university's magazines. The man liked to show off, but other than his nasty personality, there was nothing really bad on him that could be exposed. No bad grades, no fighting (except for that one time with Will?, and no dating news.

As if he could read his mind, Chilton had appeared in the hallways where Will and Hannibal were standing. This time though, he wasn't with his usual clique that followed him around everywhere.

He stopped in front of a classroom, looking around him like he was afraid of being watched, then opened the door with a smile.

Strange.

"Let's go check." Will suggested, grabbing Hannibal by the sleeve of his shirt.

"Why would you follow Frederick?"

"I don't know, I just- I have a feeling there's something wrong."

And just like that, the couple tried to spy from the narrow space of the half-closed door. There it was Chilton talking with a professor. *Very* close to the professor, so much that they were inches away from each other, a soft smile on his lips while he muttered something to the older man.

"*Holy shit."* Will whispered, quickly reaching into his pocket for his phone. This would make for a really great scandal.

He took a few photos, just at the same time as Chilton took the professor's necktie in hand.

Perfect .

—--

'The teacher's pet; Frederick Chilton caught with a professor?'

Beverly read the title and laughed, while Price patted Will on the shoulder.

“How did Freddie get this photo of Chilton?”

Will shrugged with a grin on his face. “I don’t know, someone probably anonymously sent this possible compromising pic to her. I wonder who it could be.”

“I’ll put up a poster of this in our room.” Zeller said, and Will wrinkled his nose. He wouldn’t want to see Chilton’s face everyday after waking up, not even for a joke.

“You should print this *and* Will’s article. Freddie made a cute little collage of you two.” Price teased.

“Very funny, guys.” Will said with a serious tone. If he had to see that page one more time he would personally delete Freddie’s entire site.

“I think it’s a cute idea.” Beverly added. “You can watch yourselves while you cuddle up in your bed, Will.”

“Hannibal is not going into our room, Bev.”

“Why not? I’m not there half of the time, so you could just sneak him in when I’m not around.” Zeller pointed out.

Will thought about it, but then remembered the state of their shared bedroom and shook his head.

“He’s not going to like it, he’s too…expensive to get in our space, let alone asking to come there himself.”

—--

Much to Will’s surprise, Hannibal *did* ask him to come there one day.

Hannibal had insisted that Will showed him his room, although Will tried everything to persuade him from coming over. Not because he didn't want Hannibal in his space, but he just *knew* that his partner would complain about how messy his room was.

Will had to admit that he and Zeller haven’t tried their best to keep their room clean, since neither Price nor Beverly had said a thing about their place. And so far, they were the only two people that came in there.

At one point, however, Hannibal had convinced Will to let him in, as Hannibal had threatened him to stop cooking for him for at least two months.

"That's not fair!" Will protested, but Hannibal was unmoved, not backing up from his threat.

"Three months, if you keep arguing."

So at the end, Will had agreed to let him come over two days from then. He promised himself that he would at least make the room presentable, but of course he wasn’t true to his words. The day had come, and there he was now, the room still a disaster; a pile of clothes laid in the corner of the room almost like some sort of decoration, books scattered across their desk and some at the end of Zeller's bed (it wasn't Will’s fault, this time), and possibly leftover food from a week ago, sitting on top of a shelf.

Will had to admit that their space was in fact a disaster, but it's not like they could have an impeccable place like Hannibal's. They didn't have half of the time that his partner had to clean all of that.

Will tried to save everything last minute, which meant making his bed a little bit more presentable. He didn't have a specific plan when he invited Hannibal over, but it was best to make *at least* his part of the room decent.

He then heard a knock on the door, scrambling to throw away some old junk and then go answer it.

Hannibal went more casual than usual with his outfit, opting for a simple red sweater and black pants. It was probably the first time he had seen Hannibal wearing something deemed normal, but Christ, even when dressed with normal human clothes he looked like a gift from heaven.

Will blinked, trying to remember how to speak. "You look-good."

"Thank you, Will." Hannibal glanced down, his mouth forming a soft smile. "I also like your attire."

Will then looked down himself, and realized that he was standing with only his boxers and a shirt that barely covered his front.

"Oh fuck, sorry I-"

He was in such a rush to clean his stuff and make it look presentable, that he had time only to put on one of his best shirts, but had forgotten all about putting some pants on.

"I don't mind, it's your room after all." Hannibal said, coming inside the room and looking around. "I would take this as an invite, even."

Will frowned, not understanding what Hannibal meant, then his partner smirked at him, and Will's cheeks flared up.

Oh. That type of invite.

"You wished." Will teased back. "Oh and don't mind the mess in here, I was about to clean and then…you arrived."

Hannibal started inspecting, and for once his expression was very telling; his eyes were wide, a slight frown on his lips, almost undetectable to most, but not to Will.

Will chuckled, sitting on the edge of the bed, then asked "Is there a problem?"

Hannibal paused, looking at the horrible shelf of leftovers, then said "No, nothing wrong darling, it's just…not my preferred style."

Will bit back a laugh; the man looked so out of place in the middle of the room, scanning the room with disgust on his face.

Hannibal then sat alongside him, still judging his surroundings, so Will gently put a hand on his cheek, making him turn around to look at him.

"Focus on me, not whatever goes on in this room." Will stated, their faces so close to each other now. In less than a minute, their lips met, Will kissing and nipping at Hannibal's mouth while dragging his fingers over his cheek. Their kiss always started slow and soft, light touches between them, then in a couple of seconds they would become impatient, Hannibal slipping his tongue between Will's lips and drawing out soft gasps and groans from his partner. Hannibal loved passing his hand in Will's curls, lightly tugging at them to hear more whines coming from Will.

Will then felt Hannibal's other hand on his thigh, taking advantage of the exposed skin and squeezing it in his palm. Will jumped at the sensation, feeling something stir in his boxers.

"I like you dressed in this way." Hannibal whispered between kisses, his hand traveling upwards until it brushed against the hem of Will's boxers.

He and Hannibal hadn't gotten further than a simple makeout session, not even daring to touch each other in sensitive areas, but Will had to admit that even this little amount of contact was making heat shoot through his body. He was certainly more undressed than all the other times they met, so that probably made him even more aware of their situation.

Will got away from the kiss, halting Hannibal with a hand on the man's chest and looking at him, lips parted and a slightly dazed look in his eyes.

"You should also be wearing less clothes now." Will said, rising from his seat to stand directly in front of Hannibal. He put his hands on Hannibal's thighs, then bent forward to be a lot closer to his partner's face before asking: "I want to see more of you, can I?"

Will was being bold, not sure if he was doing the right thing, but he felt so desperate that he was willing to accept any response from his partner.

Hannibal initially stayed silent, only nodding at him while maintaining eye contact. "Please do." He then said in a low voice.

Will grinned, his stomach clenching at hearing the change in Hannibal's voice, and dropped to his knees, slowly opening Hannibal's legs further.

He pressed his nose to Hannibal's hip, feeling his hardening cock with his hand and squeezing it. A low, guttural groan left Hannibal's mouth, fingers already massaging Will's head as an invitation to go forward.

Will looked up, maintaining eye contact while he unzipped Hannibal's pants, slowly dragging them down until his boxers were exposed, the outline of his cock clearly visible. He was glad to know that he wasn't the only one affected by a simple kiss.

Will's mind whirled, his heart pulsing fast as realizing what he was about to do. He licked his lips, moving forward to press his face against the hard length beneath the fabric and-

A click at the door, then a person coming through.

"Hey Will, I forgot my sweat-" Zeller swung the door open while looking at the ground, then glanced upwards and immediately turned his head to the side " *Oh-* "

Will quickly got up on his feet, sitting at the edge of the bed and desperately trying to cover him and Hannibal with his sheets. "Brian, *Jesus Christ-* "

"I'm sorry to interrupt you, I just-" Zeller walked towards his own bed, a hand over his eyes so as not to look at the pair, and turned his back on them in search of something. "I need to find my sweater 'cause I'm freezing in Price's room-by the way, hi Lecter."

"Hello, Brian." Hannibal said calmly. Was Will the only person that was freaking out in this situation?

Then Zeller raised his arm, clutching a gray jumper in his hand. "Found it." He got up, looking anywhere else but the two and rushing towards the door. "I'm sorry, again. Continue where you left off."

Will put his hands in his hair, grimacing at the fact that his roommate had walked in on them. God, their next hang out would certainly be awkward.

Zeller was about to close the door, but he rapidly popped his head in the room and said "Don't make a mess, especially on my side. See you later!"

Hannibal patted a hand on Will's shoulder, while his partner was still trying so hard to hide himself from the shame.

"It could have been a lot worse, Will." Hannibal tried to reassure him.

"Like what, seeing me bent over the desk? That would have been fucking awful."

Their private intimate moment had been interrupted, so Hannibal spent the next half an hour cheering Will up, telling him that they could continue whenever he wanted to.

—--

Like Will imagined, the next time he hung out with his friends, Zeller looked at him funny when he arrived, a wide smile on his face like he was proud of him.

"Here comes the lovebird." Beverly teased, and Will rolled his eyes at her.

"I think Freddie has bigger stories to write, since Chilton had been exposed." Will pointed out. Even after a week, the story was still on everybody's lips.

"Probably, but it's still a bit weird seeing you two being so...affectionate." Price added.

“Yeah, we have never seen you so clingy to someone before. And by the way, how did the other day go?” Zeller asked, pushing his seat a bit closer to Will to hear his response.

The other two friends looked at each other with furrowed brows, then looked back at Will, wanting to know more about what Zeller was referring to.

Will sank more in his chair and glared at his roomate; he was going to kill him one of these days.

"It's nothing, really." Will tried to dismiss them, but Price pressed further.

"Oh, did you two have fun alone?" He said, putting on the smile he always had when he was about to hear some gossip.

"No, it's not-"

"Yeah I saw him with Hannibal in our room," Zeller replied before Will could finish his sentence. "I interrupted them while they were-"

"GUYS," Will yelled to get their attention, then immediately went back to a quieter tone to not attract other people’s attention. "Let's talk about something else. Please."

"Yeah, Will is right, it's his business after all." Beverly interrupted their questioning, and Will nodded.

Then she turned to him, moving forward again. "But for real Will, did you do something already?"

"Oh my *god-"* Will mumbled, rubbing a hand on his face. "We didn't do anything!"

"Oh sorry, that's my fault."

"No Zeller, don't worry about it, it's just…" Will paused, remembering how warm brown eyes had looked down at him that day. "Haven't found the right time yet."

"Then what are you waiting for? He clearly wants to go further." Beverly said, and the other two nodded in agreement.

"Yeah probably, but I can't look at him without feeling embarrassed, I mean what if fuck up so bad that he doesn't want to see me?" Will tried explaining, but the trio simultaneously shook their heads.

"You're being paranoid. Have you seen how he looks at you?"

"He has heart eyes everytime you are near him."

"Lecter is probably waiting for the right moment to ask- oh, hi Lecter." Zeller said, and the group turned around to see Hannibal approaching them with a smile.

"Good Morning. Sorry to interrupt, I just wanted to borrow Will from you for a second."

The trio stayed still for a second, then nodded enthusiastically, followed by a series of 'yes' and 'of course' and 'take your time'.

Great guys , Will thought, *you are really helping here.*

So Hannibal and Will sat in one of the benches near the trio, distant enough so that they couldn't hear their conversation. Of course, his friends were looking in their direction, trying their best to eavesdrop at least some of their words.

Will tapped a rhythm with his fingers to prevent from freaking out again. They saw each other several times after that day, but hadn't talked about the incident yet.

"Will, regarding the previous situation…"

Oh god, he was going to tell him that Will was too fucking awkward to go further than kissing. Will breached himself, preparing for the worst-

"I wanted to invite you to come sleep in my room, tomorrow night."

Will fixed his eyes on Hannibal, trying to figure out if he heard him wrong.

"... Tomorrow?"

"Yes. I want to make it up to you. I will make you dinner, then you can stay in my room." Hannibal explained, but Will was too busy trying to figure out the second meaning behind his words.

Stay. In my room. For the night.

That could only mean one thing, and Will had to prepare well before it.

Hannibal noticed the vacant expression on his partner, so he cupped Will's cheek with one hand, and that seemed to make him come back to their conversation.

"Is that alright with you?" Hannibal asked, keeping his tone light.

Will looked back at his friends, who were all giving him the thumbs up and mouthing words of encouragement. He then gazed at Hannibal again, nodding absently at him.

"Yes, it's okay." Will replied quickly, his mind going elsewhere.

Because tomorrow night was supposed to go perfectly fine.

—--

Will put his hands through his hair.

After countless hours of research for how he was supposed to prepare for tonight, he closed his laptop with a sigh.

He encountered too many weird sites that talked about people's worst experiences, kinks that he didn't even know existed and more, so he had given up on getting anything useful out of it.

He had been with girls before, but having sex with a man would have probably been a lot difficult. Hell, he didn't even know how to suck dick, but he was desperate to find out that day in his room.

Will heard the door click, and when he raised his head he saw his roomate coming in.

"Oh, did you have another failure in bed with Lecter? I didn't see him get out of the room though."

"No, that's not it-" Will stopped himself, then exhaled another sigh. "I…I need to prepare for, you know, tonight."

"Did you browse through those sketchy websites and found nothing but disgusting things?"

Will didn't respond, but his face was telling enough. Zeller put his hands on his hips, looking at him like a disappointed dad.

"You could have asked me, you know."

Will shook his head. No, it was embarrassing enough getting caught trying to get in his boyfriend's boxers, he couldn't possibly ask him to help him with this stuff.

Zeller sat beside Will, putting a hand on his shoulder. It reminded him of the times when his dad would teach him how to fish. But this time, he was supposed to catch another type of fish.

"I've done a lot of things with Price, so-" Will glared at him, not wanting to hear more of where that was going. "...Well, I can tell you a few tips."

Reluctantly, he accepted Zeller's offer, making him promise to not get too graphic or give a physical demonstration.

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The clock struck 7pm. Will checked himself out in the mirror, adjusting his already messy hair. He wanted to make an impression on Hannibal, even though the man looked at him with heart eyes even when he was wearing his pajama pants.

He took a deep breath, gathered his stuff in a gym bag and set off to Hannibal's room.

As he walked, he kept reminding himself what Zeller had told him.

'Relax, have fun and practice safe sex!' his roommate said before he exited the room.

It felt more like a condom advertisement rather than an advice, but Will got the message.

He knocked on Hannibal's door, tapping on his thigh to release tension. When he saw his partner, Will held his breath.

In contrast to his usual slicked-back hair, some strands were falling on his forehead, framing his sharp features. He was wearing a simple burgundy red shirt that hugged his waist and enhanced his strong arms, and a pair of checkered sweatpants that was tight in the front.

"Hello, Will. Please come in." Hannibal moved to the side to let him in. Instead, Will thought of something else; he dropped his bag on the ground, took his partner's head in his hands and kissed him deeply.

Hannibal stumbled backwards due to the unexpected attack, then grabbed Will by the waist and smiled through the kiss.

"To what do I owe this greeting, darling?" Hannibal asked, peppering kisses all over Will's jaw.

Will cleared his throat, moving away from Hannibal to regain his thinking. "Nothing, I just missed you." He said while picking up his bag and entering for good this time.

He really needed to control himself, since he was about to throw all their plans to the wind and ask him to take him right there and then.

Hannibal stayed still, looking at Will while the man placed his belongings on the bed. "Dinner is ready, if you don't mind."

They sat at the table facing each other, a large plate in the middle of it right next to a small lamp that set the right atmosphere, something quiet and cozy.

"I know you like italian food, so I made you a new recipe." Hannibal took Will's plate and filled it until it was full enough. "Pappardelle alla lepre. It's a dish I tried when I was in Florence."

"You went to Florence?"

"Yes, two years ago. I wanted to see the Uffizi gallery, and while I was there I was able to learn new things to cook."

Will took some of the pasta with his fork, letting out a low hum as the pleasant taste filled his mouth. "It's delicious." He said, noticing that Hannibal had an amused expression on his face. The man knew that he was good at cooking, but Will realized that he loved getting praised for his work, whether it was in the kitchen or in other contexts.

"I would like to show you Florence one day." Hannibal suddenly said. He was still smiling at Will, a tender look in his eyes as he watched him finish his dinner.

Will's heart thumped in his chest, as he imagined him and Hannibal going on a proper trip to the city. Only the two of them, left undisturbed to wander around the historical buildings and wonderful statues that adorned the squares.

Will blushed, slowly nodding. “Yes, I would very much like that.” He then raised from his seat, helping his partner clear the table. “Can you tell me more about what you saw in the gallery?”

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“Don’t look.”

Will ordered Hannibal. He tried to strip from his day clothes and put on something more comfortable, but he could feel the other man’s stare on him as he was taking off his shirt.

“I’m not, darling.” Hannibal said between laughs, but did as ordered, pretending to be interested in whatever books he had in his library.

After putting on a white t-shirt, he debated whether to put on his sweatpants or not. He was aware of how his partner had looked at him the last time he was in boxers. At the end, he folded his pants, putting them away in the bag again. Hannibal certainly wouldn’t have minded that.

Soon they were laid in bed, Will resting his head to Hannibal’s chest and hearing the calming rhythm of his heart. His partner, on the other hand, was telling him all about the wonderful art he saw in Florence, mindlessly passing a hand through Will’s dark curls.

“Then there’s the Primavera by Botticelli, one of my favourites. I remember I sat there for a while, sketching a part of the painting in my notebook.” Hannibal then looked down at Will, brushing some locks off Will’s forehead so that his face was fully visible. “It was beautiful.”

Will smiled at him, his heart beating fast. He really enjoyed these peaceful moments with Hannibal, where they didn’t have to worry about anything but each other.

He closed the distance between them, leaving a soft kiss on his partner’s lips.

A hand landed on Will’s cheek, and that small contact made Hannibal move, licking and biting at Will’s lower lip. Hannibal wrapped his other arm around Will’s waist, pulling their bodies against each other, one knee between Will’s thighs, so close to his crotch. Will gasped against Hannibal’s mouth, so his partner took the opportunity to slip his tongue between Will’s lips.

They pulled apart for a moment, their breaths coming in pants, lips parted and half-lidded gazes.

Hannibal gave a half smile at Will, then left a chaste kiss on Will’s forehead. He took the sheets from the side and covered them both, tugging Will close to him.

“Goodnight, Will.”

Wait, what?

“What do you mean *goodnight* ?” Will asked, frowning when the man didn’t seem to understand the question.

Will then sat up, looking at him a bit disappointed. Hannibal sat up as well, rubbing his fingers on Will's thigh while waiting for a clue.

"I thought we were about to-you know-" Will started babbling on, but the confused expression on his partner's face didn't change. Was he really so dense that he couldn't get the hint?

Exasperated, he sighed, shook his head and calmly explained. "Sex. I wanted you to fuck me."

Hannibal's eyebrows shoot up at the last words, mouth gaping like he had something to say. Will flopped onto the mattress, face buried between the pillows to hide his embarrassment.

Hannibal then huffed a laugh, stroking Will's back to soothe him. "Will, you could have told me sooner."

"I'd rather die."

"Don't be so dramatic, dear."

Will felt the bed bent on his side, now hearing Hannibal a lot closer to him.

"I wanted to, but after what happened with your roommate I didn't want to rush you."

Will turned his head to the side, still pouting. "Are you sure?" he mumbled, cheek pressed into the cushion.

"Do you really think I didn't want to fuck my boyfriend someday?"

Stunned from what his partner just said, Will's eyes widened, then sat back up again. Judging by the way in which Hannibal portrayed himself, the thought of having the man in the most physical way possible hadn't occurred to Will's mind. At least, not until a few days ago.

Hannibal hooked his fingers under Will's chin, looking at him with a lustful gaze , an expression so different from all the ones Will had seen before. "You have no idea how much power you have on me."

Will felt a sudden heat pool in his belly and closed the distance again, crashing his mouth with Hannibal's.

"Then I want to finish what I started last time." Will mumbled on Hannibal's lips.

He pulled away from Hannibal, then dropped to his knees in front of him. His partner sat at the edge of the bed, his legs on either side of his head. Despite their positions, the man looked pliant, hands resting besides his hips, patiently waiting for Will to make the first move.

"Will you let me?"

Will ran his mouth on Hannibal's knee, leaving kisses on the skin until he reached the tent of his sweatpants. He rested his cheek on Hannibal's thigh, looking up at him innocently. He could feel the twitch in Hannibal's leg, and grinned at the realization of what he was doing to him, how close Will was to seeing his partner lose himself.

"You're being bold, Will." Hannibal finally said, trying so hard not to seem affected, although his body was saying otherwise. "Then yes, go on."

Will sighed at hearing the permission, wasting no time to pull down Hannibal's sweatpants. The man lifted his hips to help him get out of them, and Will was met with the growing bulge under black underwear. He placed his palm against it, feeling the hot, girthy length twitch at his touch and a soft hum from Hannibal.

Not wanting to waste any more time, Will hooked his fingers into the waistband of the briefs, easing them off as Hannibal's cock bobbed free. Will felt himself throb in his underwear, so desperate to relieve himself just for a second, but suppressed the urge as he looked at the heavy length in front of him.

The fact was that Will had never sucked dick in his life, even though he couldn't wait to taste Hannibal on his tongue. He hadn't been so desperate with any of his previous (few) partners, so eager to please the man above him.

Will tentatively licked a stripe up Hannibal's length, and soon felt fingers gripping at his scalp, careful as to not hurt.

"Let yourself go," Will said, sucking lightly at the tip of Hannibal's cock. "Don't be gentle."

Will then glanced at Hannibal's face while he continued pressing kisses to the twitching flesh. The eye contact seemed to spur his partner on, who gave a deep rumbling moan as his legs trembled around Will's head.

Will took a moment to taste the thick head leaking precum, then slowly started swallowing him down, flattening his tongue against the underside of the shaft and getting as far as he could manage. He wasn't able to get the full length down his throat, and instead opted to stroke the remaining part with his hand. His vision was straining to look at his partner now, but damn if it wasn't rewarding seeing Hannibal so ruined, his breath coming in pants and grunts and his eyes so focused on watching Will take him in his mouth. What he lacked in skill, Will compensated with eagerness, pulling back to observe the dripping cock but not stop stroking it at the base.

"You're beautiful…so beautiful, dear-" Hannibal caressed the back of Will's head, then suddenly fisted a hand in his hair and used his grip to push Will's head back to his cock.

Will moaned around the length, gripping at Hannibal's thighs while the man started fucking his mouth, small jerks of his hips that stuffed his cock into Will's throat, making him choke on it. Will felt tears pricking at his eyes, determined to give Hannibal what he wanted. He could feel the shaft throbbing in his mouth, the other man's movement becoming less rhythmic as more fluids gathered on his tongue, so Will knew that Hannibal was close.

Will hollowed his cheek, wanting to bring his partner to the edge, and then-

A hand yanked him off the length, fingers wound tight in his curls. Will pulled in breath after breath, rolling his eyes up to see what had stopped him. Hannibal was staring at him with his mouth open, trying to hold it all together. Will could tell that his composed demeanor had slipped away, only leaving a primal hunger in his expression.

“How could you believe- that I didn’t want to have you like this?” Hannibal’s voice sounded hoarse, his chest moving rapidly as he panted. The grip on Will’s hair was still strong, keeping him still in front of the length.

"I want to see that angelic face of yours contort from pleasure-" Will stood up on wobbly knees, making space in Hannibal’s lap as the man continued talking “and hear you cry and beg for more as you come on my cock. Would you like that?"

Will whimpered, the filthy words spilling from his partner mouth followed by a gentle question making him throb. He settled right over Hannibal's exposed cock, then ground his hips down.

"Yes, I want that- take me-"

Hannibal's hand slipped between their bodies, squeezing at Will's hard bulge and gaining a moan out of him.

“Is this why you didn't put your pants on?” Hannibal left kisses up Will’s jaw, slowly moving his fingers under Will’s shirt and gripping at the hem.

“Sh-shut up-"

Hannibal tugged off Will’s shirt, leaving his torso exposed to the cool air in the room. Hannibal’s hands traveled down the sides of Will, admiring every inch of his body like he was a work of art himself. His skin was glistening with sweat, cheeks pink and his mouth still wet with spit and precum, panting upon him as Will maintained his balance with a hand on his chest.

“Gorgeous.” Hannibal whispered over Will’s neck, nipping and sucking at the pale skin there, careful to leave a mark on him.

He then grabbed Will by his waist, making him lie down at the center of the bed with his back against the sheets. Hannibal crawled up over him, one hand braced beside Will’s head and the other playing with the waistband of his boxers. Will flushed red at the thought of being laid bare in front of the other man, only a thin piece of clothing left to cover him.

“I need to prepare you first. Can I?”

Will nodded, covering his face with his arms as Hannibal removed the soaked underwear. He heard Hannibal getting up from the bed, searching for something in one of the drawers and settling down between Will’s legs again.

A hand lifted Will's arm out of his face, making him come in contact with Hannibal's hazy gaze. The man looked as desperate as him, so that made Will a little less tense.

"Let me see your face, darling." Hannibal said with a half smile. He took the bottle of lube in his hand, while he opened Will's legs further.

"When did you buy that?" *And why, most of all.*

"I told you, I would have liked fucking my boyfriend someday."

Hannibal opened the lube and slicked a finger. He made a slow descent to Will's chest, leaving mouth-open kisses to Will's neck, then shoulder, until he dropped his lips to one of Will's nipples, licking and biting at it as he heard Will gasp beneath him. Hannibal kept him distracted with his mouth and rubbed at Will's hole, slowly dipping one finger inside.

Will's hips jerked upwards at the intrusion, but didn't complain when a second finger was added, too busy winding his hands in Hannibal's scalp. Hannibal moved forward and claimed Will's lips, at the same time as he curled his fingers and hit the bundle of nerves inside Will.

Will moaned on Hannibal's mouth, pulling away and turning his head to the side, leaving more access for Hannibal to nip at his neck, more purple bruises blooming on his skin. Will knew what his partner was doing; Hannibal was being possessive, wanting others to see that Will was only his. A silly thought, seeing how they had just recently started to see each other, but at the same time made Will feel good about himself, knowing that Hannibal looked at him like he was the most amazing thing in the world.

Another rub at his prostate made Will bite his lips, trying to muffle any embarrassing sounds coming from himself.

"Don't hold them in love, I want to hear you scream for me."

With that, Hannibal added another finger, thrusting and scissoring them inside of Will. In return, Will opened his mouth, only a string of moans and whimpers escaping his lips.

"Hurry- *please* , Hannibal-" Will rocked back onto Hannibal's fingers, hoping to hit the sweet nub inside of him again and again. He didn't want to come by fingers alone, rather feel the man stretching him out, but this felt almost too good to stop, with Hannibal kissing at his shoulder while thrusting into him so deep.

Once Will seemed prepared enough, Hannibal pulled out his fingers, Will wincing at the loss of contact. Hannibal then took one of the condoms on the bed, ripping the package with his teeth and rolling it carefully down to the base. Will observed him, the muscle of his arms flexing as he stroked himself, face concentrated in the action, and hair sticking at his forehead. He felt lucky having this man all for himself, only his to see during these intimate moments.

While Hannibal loved putting him on display like a prize, while Will much preferred showing his affection in private, hidden in their own little world.

As he gazed at the man in front of him, Will noticed the difference between them; Hannibal was taller and broader, soft pecs that Will wanted so badly to bury his face in, and more muscles that wrapped around his arms. Thick legs compared to Will's encased his sides, and Will swallowed as he glanced at Hannibal's covered cock.

“I want to try something, but only if you’ll let me.” Hannibal put his hands on Will’s back and pulled him towards him, so that the man was sitting in his lap once again, legs clinging to Hannibal’s waist. Will could feel the hot length brushing between the cleft of his ass and held his breath. “I want to look at you, while I’m so deep inside you.”

Will suddenly felt a warm sensation on his chest as he looked at the man; here, completely stripped of all layers and at Hannibal’s disposal, he felt safe. He put his arms around Hannibal’s neck, beaming at him.

“Do what you want to me, my darlin’. I trust you.”

Hannibal smiled back, leaving a soft kiss on his lips. He then lifted Will from his waist, angling just the right amount so that he sat on his tip, then slowly helped him take him, until he was sat at the base. Will rested his head on Hannibal’s shoulder, grunting as he felt himself stretch over the full length. He felt some kind of burn as he sat down on his cock, but not stopping for a second until he could be fully seated.

With a groan, he took the last bit left, keeping still to adjust at the feeling of being so full.

Hannibal stroked Will’s back, letting him take his time to get used to the stretch. “You are doing so well.” He whispered right in Will’s ear, seeing how tense the other man was. Will tried to even out his breath, all of his pleasure mounting in a different new place.

After a few minutes of leaving kisses on Will’s neck, Hannibal asked “Can I move, dear?”

Will stayed silent, instead slowly nodding, not lifting his head up for a second.

Hannibal gave a few experimental thrust upwards, keeping Will still with a hand patting his curls, and the other gripping at his hip. Moans and groans were drawn from Will with each thrust upwards, and he was left only to cling so hard to his partner. The dull throb in his back was now getting mixed with pleasure, Hannibal's cock striking at Will's prostate every time he rocked his hips up.

"So full*, fuck*-" Will groaned, the sounds he made muffled by the position he held, pressed so close in the crook of Hannibal’s neck.

“Look at me.” Hannibal ordered, even though Will shielded his face once again. He then grabbed a fistful of curls, forcefully yanked his head back and heard Will’s first loud moan of the night. He looked absolutely wrecked, with his blue eyes filled with tears, his mouth reddened from biting his lips so hard, and hair messed up from all the pulling. With this, he really looked straight out of a painting, like one of those angels that Hannibal saw in the Uffizi gallery.

"I said look at me.” Hannibal started a brutal pacing, grinning at Will as he drew more moans out of him.

This time Will didn't hold back, throwing his head back as he moaned loudly, not caring that other people from outside could hear him. He was in Hannibal's grip, and that's all that mattered.

“My perfect angel.”

Hannibal stared at him in trance, hips snapping at a relentless space. His boy was beautiful, just as he imagined him to be. He arched his back as he panted, his full body painted in a soft blush. Hannibal wanted to lick and bite at those pink nipples once again, and pamper kisses down Will's sweaty stomach. The only marks visible were on Will's neck, and Hannibal hoped to leave more and more on him in different places, so that everyone could tell who he was going out with.

He couldn't get enough of him, even when he already gave him everything he had. It was selfish of him to want to keep Will all to himself, but at least he was certain that the man was his.

Soon Will was getting close to the edge, his warm wall squeezing Hannibal's cock and gaining a low grunt from him.

"Hannibal- I'm so close, please-"

Suddenly Will’s back met the mattress again, as Hannibal placed Will’s legs over his shoulders, holding his thighs for better grip as he picked up the pace. Hannibal fucked him hard, sounds of skin slapping on skin filling the room along with Will's pants and moans. He gripped at the sheets over his head, feeling pleasure building rapidly inside of him, a sign that he wouldn’t be able to last much longer. His untouched cock bobbed between them, steadily leaking more fluids as the thrust continued.

" *Ah* - I'm gonna come-"

"Come with me, darling, come-"

Hannibal then wrapped a hand around Will's cock, earning a yelp from the other man, and pumping him in time with his rut.

The tight coil in Will's stomach wound tighter at the further stimulation, his head swirling with every sensation he felt at the moment, too much but also not enough.

With a final stroke to his cock, Will came into Hannibal's hand, spurting up onto his chest with his mouth open, gasping for air. Hannibal followed him not long after with a firm hard thrust against Will's ass and a guttural groan coming deep from his throat, spilling into the condom before placing down his partner's legs.

Will stayed completely still as he came down from the tide of ecstasy, barely feeling Hannibal get up from the bed and retrieve a damp cloth to clean him. He only glanced at him

when his partner passed a hand through his sweaty forehead, smiling at him before placing a kiss on top of his head. Hannibal sat alongside him, tracing light touches on Will's arm.

"How do you feel, Will?"

Will rolled to the side to place his face on the other man's chest, rubbing his nose against the pecs. He had also fulfilled this wish.

"Tired. So…Fucking Tired." Will mumbled. "But happy. I really am happy."

"Was I too rough?" Hannibal asked, brushing fingers on Will's curls.

"No, it was perfect." Will said. "You let yourself go, just like I asked you to."

Will leaned more into the touch, as Hannibal encaged him with his arms.

"You were perfect too."

Will couldn't contain his smile at the phrase, trying to hide his face by burying his head in the man's chest.

He slowly drifted to sleep, with Hannibal's voice still in his ears and soft touches along his back.

Will hummed absently at Hannibal's words, as he felt more sleep seep into him. He hadn't felt this relaxed in a long time, and that probably had to do with having his partner so close to him. Peace, at last.

When Will had fallen deep asleep, Hannibal placed a kiss on Will's curls, letting one last sentence come out of his lips.

"I won't let you go. Ever again." he said softly.

They felt both lucky to have found one another, although they haven't had the time to say it out loud to one another yet.

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Many years later

“Do you think Mrs. Du Maurier remembers us?”

Hannibal shook his head, writing the professors’ name on the sheet of paper and adding a question mark at the end of it. “Difficult to say, she had so many students throughout the years.”

“Well yeah, but we were her favourites, if you remember.”

“We should probably invite her. After all, she’s the reason we ended up talking in the first place.” Hannibal said, raising his head to look at Will and smiling.

They were in their shared apartment, sitting across from each other. Only them, finally in peace. And the small taps of their dogs' paws on the carpet, of course.

They have been together for many years now, and Will couldn't believe that he had met his partner in such a simple and strange way. They had promised each other that after graduation they would move in together, seen as even after just three months of dating they were always attached to one another; soon Will was sleeping in Hannibal's dorm more than his actual one, so much so that Zeller joked about changing roommates since Will's bed was often empty. After that one time of almost being caught by Zeller, they didn't try to be intimate in that room ever again, saving for a few light kisses they shared.

Soon graduation arrived, and the two of them had different careers in mind; Hannibal wanted to become a physiatrist, seen as how he was always able to see people's true personalities. At least, excluding Will, who at the start of their relationship was always unpredictable.

Will on the other hand wanted to work in the criminology field. He wasn't squeamish around blood, and would have loved to help solve cases, getting into other people's twisted minds and analyzing their way of thinking.

For this to happen, they had to follow different courses, so they wouldn't be able to see each other at lessons, not even during breaks. Sharing an apartment was the perfect solution to this problem. Will thought about renting one and seeing what would happen next, but one day Hannibal went to visit him with a pair of keys in his hand.

"What are those for?"

"The keys to our new apartment. I found one on sale that is at the perfect distance for both of your campuses."

"You bought a whole house?!"

After that, Will asked his partner so many questions about this new purchase, the first being how Hannibal was able to afford an entire place for the two of them. Hannibal brushed it off as nothing important, telling Will that he could see this as a 'gift'. Will still didn't know how rich Hannibal's family was, but he could tell that it was probably *a lot.*

And so their lives continued close to one another; they were still one of the best in their respective courses, and at dinner time they both would share what they had learned that day, never ceasing to discover something new and interesting. Will would still meet with his friends on campus, as Zeller, Beverly and Price all wanted to work in the forensic team one day. They often asked him how things were going with Hannibal, even though they could tell that Will was the happiest he had ever been in a lot of years just from his expressions alone. His eyes would always lit up whenever he talked about his boyfriend, although he would never say out loud to others how much the other man meant to him.

Soon Will discovered that Hannibal liked to give him expensive gifts (like he did with their house) whenever he felt like it, without ever asking for anything in return. *'You are already a rare gift to me'* Hannibal always said to him.

The day Will finally finished his degree, Hannibal had organized the entire day for him; they went out for lunch in the most expensive place Will had ever been to, then sat in the soft grass of the park near their house, and when the sun begun to go down they finally laid in their bed, so close to one another. At some point, Hannibal had slowly pulled away from Will, telling him that he had a surprise for him in the other room. He then came back with a big box in his hands, where they could hear some whines coming from the inside.

Will sat at the edge of the bed, carefully lifting the lid open until he could see a little puppy staring right at him, yapping at him and wagging his curly tail.

“Oh my god.”

“Do you like him?” Hannibal had asked, sitting on the other side of the box as Will picked the small dog in his arms.

“You got me a puppy.” Will said in disbelief, mouth starting to hurt from how much he was smiling.

He had mentioned to Hannibal that he wanted a dog years ago, back when they first got together, then never brought it back up as he wasn’t sure his partner would have wanted a furry creature running around and possibly ruining his belongings.

“He was the runt of the litter. No one wanted him since he had a weird coat.”

Will then closed the distance between them, giving a small peck on Hannibal’s lips that was almost entirely teeth due to the smile still across Will’s face. The puppy that pressed between the two of them joined in on the celebration, licking at Will’s chin to get his attention back to him.

“I love you so much. I mean it.” Will said softly at Hannibal.

He had never felt so loved like he did in these years with him.

After that, the couple didn’t stop adopting more strays. Will would often find them abandoned on the side of the road, and couldn’t help but pick them up and bringing them home with him. Hannibal wasn’t an animal person to begin with, and usually the sight of a lost dog didn’t exactly move him that much. However, when Will *would* give him puppy eyes to let him keep the new found dog, then Hannibal couldn’t resist to say yes. And so that’s how they ended up with 6 dogs over the course of a few years.

Now there they were, listing all 6 dogs as guests on their wedding day. Hannibal quickly scanned the sheet of paper, careful not to forget any person. When the trio had known that the couple was getting married, they specifically asked to be the *first* people to be invited to the ceremony.

“What about Chilton? Do you think he has changed?”

Will glared at him, offended at even the question. “Of course not. Have you seen what type of articles he writes now? Careful because you might work with him someday.”

“Nonsense.” Hannibal clicked his tongue. “He can’t stand my guts even to this day.”

Will passed his thumb over his new shiny ring, a promise that Hannibal made to him. He often found himself doing this when he was deep in thought.

"And we still need to think about the honeymoon."

The main ceremony was almost all planned out. It took them a while to decide what type of event they wanted; Hannibal always wanted to go big, as he wanted to rent the huge fancy restaurant on the lakeshore, accompanied with a small orchestra and an over the top cake that Hannibal would personally prepare.

Will was the opposite, rather going for a small formality with a few of his most trusted friends and acquaintances. He would have loved getting married in the church of his hometown, like most of his family did.

In the end Hannibal had settled for what his partner wanted, although he was still set on the idea of making the wedding cake himself. All they needed to do now was decide who to invite, and most of all pick a place for their honeymoon. That would have turned out even more difficult to choose.

"What if we go to Lithuania, so we can go visit the rest of your family?"

Hannibal gave the slightest wince at the mention; he didn't like talking about his family even after all this time. He was close to his sister Mischa, who was invited to the wedding as well, but hadn't said anything about his other relatives.

"Or maybe we can go back to Florence. In the same palace where I asked for your hand." Hannibal suggested.

Will thought about it, remembering the time Hannibal had suddenly announced that they would be going on a trip to Italy for a week, all planned by his partner. They visited the center of Florence, Hannibal guiding him through the city and surprising Will with his Italian whenever he needed to order something. Then, in the evening of their last day of vacation, Hannibal had dropped to one knee in front of the dome, and had asked Will to marry him right then and there.

When Will had immediately said yes with tears forming in his eyes, a round of applause had followed them soon after, as people gathered to look at the proposal.

"How romantic of you, doing it in front of everyone. Very subtle." Will now pointed out. He had also to admit that he wouldn't have changed a single thing about the proposal.

Their set up came to an abrupt end when Will's phone rang. He looked at the number, and groaned when he realized that his boss was calling him. That meant another body had been found.

Will glanced at the wall, and the clock of the living room striked 9PM. The couple just now realized how much time had passed since they started thinking about the preparations.

Will sighed, passing a hand on his face. Another night spent searching for clues.

"Let's finish this tomorrow, alright? I got to go to a crime scene."

"Don't worry, darling, we still have plenty of time to decide." Hannibal had assured him, then placed a kiss on Will's cheek. "Be careful out there. Call me if something happens."

"I'm sorry, I swear we will have a night for ourselves one of these days."

He so badly wanted an evening spent curled up on the couch with Hannibal and their dogs, although in the last month there have been many more crimes reported than what he was used to, and hadn't had time to stay that much with his fiancee.

Hannibal once again assured him that he didn't matter, and that he would totally be relaxed once they leave for their honeymoon.

Hannibal placed his chin on Will's shoulder. "If you'd like, tomorrow night I will pamper you with all my attention." He said in a low voice, his hands roaming around Will's waist and bringing him towards himself. Will knew what that tone meant, and felt heat rising in his gut.

"Yeah- I would…very much like that." Will said back, sighing when he felt Hannibal's lips on his neck. God, staying at home and feeling more of his partner on him had started to sound very appealing.

With a shake of his head, he slowly pulled away from Hannibal, at least when he could still prevent losing all his inhibitions.

"I have to go, I will hopefully be back soon."

And with that, he left a quick kiss on Hannibal's lips before exiting the door.

He placed his ring in his pockets, careful not to lose it during one of these searches.

It was one of his most precious possessions after all.

Immediately after his husband, of course.

Chapter End Notes

And that's all folks! I certainly have planned more Hannigram AUs because I can't get enough of these two, so stay tuned for more!
(sneak peak: the next au is probably a hunter x prince ;))

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!